

**ASSOCIATE PASTOR AS COLLABORATOR:
EXPANDING WOMEN'S MINISTRY FOR
FULFILLMENT AND STABILITY**

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ABSTRACT

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The project examines the lack of stability and fulfillment female associate pastors experience in hierarchical senior/associate relationships. The objective is to provide recommendations for sustainable relationships at church. The examination occurs through interviews, questionnaires and surveys with associate pastors, senior pastors, and congregation members. A six-session presentation of results is shared with a church group, and effectiveness tested via pre- and post-tests. The project argues that although limits still exist, there are improvements to be made in female associate pastors' situations.

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate the writing and implementation of this project to Windsor United Church of Christ, who supported me in creating and implementing this project in their midst. I required significant time to write this document, and your patience, encouragement and support helped make this dream come true.

To the women associate pastors of the Southwest Association of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ: you have forged a unique path over the last forty years during which there have been many accomplishments as well as frustrations. If it were not for you, God's people would only have heard men preach, celebrate the sacraments, and pray, and I may not have recognized God's call with such clarity.

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INTRODUCTION

The turnover rate of associate pastors is high while the satisfaction they derive from their jobs is often low. The average tenure of associate pastors in mainline denominations in the United States is between three and four years.¹ This is half the average senior pastor tenure. The majority of associate pastors are women.² They usually leave for a solo pastor position, which is seen as a better call. This pattern creates instability and distrust in the congregation, the church staff, and the associate pastor's family.

Women's professional fulfillment and stability are affected by whether the ministry setting is more collaborative or hierarchical. Similarly, whether women are empowered to work autonomously and are endorsed with authority has an impact as well. Whether the job description is traditional or really suits the pastor's gifts and skills is certainly another factor. Finally, dispelling a congregation's expectation of having a man in the pulpit can help women clergy become more accepted as effective leaders in the church.

This study came about as an act of self-defense, self-protection, and self-preservation. Having stumbled through so many of the typical pitfalls women in ministry

¹ Len Kageler, *The Youth Ministry Survival Guide: How to Thrive and Last for the Long Haul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 17.

² Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce, "Survey of Associate Pastors," U.S. Congregations, posted October 2009, accessed November 4, 2013, <http://www.uscongregations.org/survey-associate-pastors.htm>.

face, particularly as associate pastors, the researcher wanted to create a plan that would guarantee safely avoiding them the second time around. A sustainable ministry was sought that would allow the researcher and her family to thrive, to avoid burn-out, to stay in one place long enough to see the kids graduate, to grow in faith and community, and finally enjoy the process. Is that possible? Or is it always the same stained-glass ceiling that causes so many headaches?

The researcher was hired with no job description, no call papers, no plan for the future, no contract and no personnel committee. This was not a problem. The senior pastor was blessedly wide open to figuring out how to work together for a ballpark goal of twenty years. He said we could take our time and build a job based on gifts and skills instead of just handing me the leftovers. He suggested some form of collaboration, and asked that we figure out what would work, and then we would talk. It has been four years since that conversation. We are figuring it out.

The researcher has been watching women ministers since she was ten years old. Some challenges have been met, and surpassed. Others remain stubbornly in place. This study of women and their experiences in churches suggests that women continue to face the stained glass ceiling in pursuing their callings and in becoming leaders in a field where resistance is prevalent. Women today face largely the same sexism and discrimination they did even 40 to 50 years ago, that kept them from preaching, teaching and leading in the church. Beginning somewhat with the suffrage movement and the right to vote in 1920, but largely since the civil rights movement and the Equal Rights Amendment, women have found ways to lead, despite resistance, sometimes in

unconventional ways. This study ends with recommendations for empowering women pastors in their calling.

Women have been underrepresented in leadership of government, business, finance, and academia. This categorical elimination from these fields has been called the glass ceiling, a term generally thought to be first used by the Wall Street Journal to indicate the barrier that keeps women from advancing or achieving because of their sex. One can see beyond it but cannot get there. In the field of religion, the term has been adapted to the stained glass ceiling to represent the barriers women face in ministry. This barrier can pertain to ordination, preaching, preaching from the pulpit, serving as senior pastor of churches of over 1000 members, or simply being the senior pastor. The goal is not to put all women pastors in parishes of over 1000 but to make sure that all ministries are fully open to women's leadership and that women's leadership is valued in all settings. This would result in greater fulfillment and stability in women's lives, ministries, and families.

Most mainline Protestant denominations began to ordain women after the civil rights movement when women's voices were heard demanding equal rights. However, as one religious leader put it, "There is now equal opportunity – maybe not equal enthusiasm, but equal opportunity..."³ Despite equal rights legislation, a chasm still existed between the decision for equality and the calling of women to pulpits. Half a century later, women are still a clear minority in church leadership, particularly in the highest positions. Large churches, affluent churches, popular churches, and historically important churches all continue to call men in far greater numbers than women. Women

³ Carl J. and Dorothy Schneider. *In Their Own Right: The History of the American Clergywomen*. (New York, NY: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 262.

are generally relegated to positions at smaller, poorer, yoked, remote, or dysfunctional churches, sometimes part time, sometimes as subservient associates, often at about 75% of the compensation a man in the same position would receive. In 2010, feminist and social activist Maureen Fiedler said, “Gender equality has become an accepted norm, culturally and theologically. It’s just a question of how soon the new order of equality is actually realized.”⁴

People point to several different reasons for this continuing discrepancy. Some say traditionalism still determines who is called to which parish. Others cite both societal and institutional sexism, ageism, and a gender bias to explain women’s absence from leadership roles. Still others declare double standards and disproportionate family responsibilities as reasons why women do not get past the stained glass ceiling. Congregations still expect the pastor to be a married man with 2.5 children.

Yet, women are making cracks in the stained glass ceiling. Despite a lack of precedent, support, appreciation and recognition of their gifts, there has been a gradual rise in women in church leadership over the last 50 years. May this study serve to continue those trajectories.

⁴ Maureen E. Fiedler, ed. *Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling: Women Religious Leaders in Their Own Words*. (New York, NY: Seabury Books, 2010), xv.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The ministry focus of this project is a mid-size mainline church with a multi-pastor staff that is looking for stability, fulfillment, and a lengthy investment in their ministry together. The church will benefit from a conscious shift from traditional senior/associate roles to coming to understand that they have two pastors on staff that share in the work to be done.

The project is to refocus the scope of the traditional associate pastor's ministry in conjunction with the other pastor(s) to form a stable, productive, collaborative staff, in order to contribute to the fulfillment and stability of the ministry. The average length of an associate pastorate is three to four years, which leads to high turnover and increased anxiety in pastor, family and church system, while also revealing shortcomings of the general associate pastor job description. Part of the need for change has been revealed through associates' ongoing dissatisfaction and frustration. There are limits and shortcomings to being an associate that can be improved upon.

The church the researcher currently serves has a history of short pastorates; most were between one and two years. In fact, only three pastors have served more than ten years in the church's 150 year history. This pattern resulted in a congregation with high anxiety and a distrust of pastoral leadership. When a pastor does stay longer than two years, it seems the congregation is just beginning to relax when the pastor moves on.

Currently, the church has been under the same pastoral leadership for twelve years, and is in the most productive and comfortable position it has been in for at least fifty years, despite carrying a large mortgage. The goals are to maintain the stable leadership, support the staff, expand the programming, and build upon the church's strengths, allowing people to use the gifts God has given them for the building up of the kingdom.

At first glance, Windsor United Church of Christ in Windsor, Wisconsin has no glaring needs. There are many facets of congregational life that run smoothly. There are two worship services every Sunday, in different styles, with active lay participation. There is lay-led adult education. There is a lay-led prayer group, and a team of lay people who visit some homebound members and send cards. There is a beautiful and extensive Sunday school program, and a budding youth group. There are opportunities for mission in the church and community. There are social activities within the life of the congregation. There are few if any members who are hospitalized in any given month, and the congregation is not prone to high-drama, emergency situations. The senior pastor's personality, sermons and worship leadership are well received. The musician works well with church volunteers of all ages and abilities. The administrator is experienced, efficient and businesslike, while also friendly and warm.

The needs of the church are opportunities. The congregation has grown to almost 500 active members, which stretches everyone on staff. The senior pastor is also a professional genealogist who travels several weeks out of the year. He is more of a visionary than an administrator. The Sunday school superintendent of twenty-five years recently passed away. The musician often needs someone to bounce ideas off of, to make sure things fit together well and appropriately. The congregation has welcomed another

pastor to fill in skillfully, but also to offer another voice and perspective from the pulpit.

The congregation appreciates new and different adult education opportunities from an ordained minister's point of view. Everyone on staff has welcomed the opportunity to be more collegial, since the Association and Conference no longer provide this atmosphere.

The researcher is working without a job description. There is a need to be intentional about creating a way of serving which is highly collaborative and suited to each pastor's gifts, instead of defaulting to a traditional model of senior/associate. The congregation needs to understand the roles as more of a team, and less stratified. The ministry will be strengthened, and the limits that cause frustration and chaffing will be eradicated.

The researcher's first job in ministry was a solo interim for a small congregation of fifty people. It was a delightful church that welcomed her leadership. The staff included a part time secretary and a music director. The Association offices were housed in the building as well. The music director was an excellent collaborator and had good pastoral sense. Yet it remained lonely at times. When the liturgical well ran dry, she went to the community clergy gatherings for encouragement and support. There were also a few active and supportive lay people in the congregation, including two retired clergy, who were guiding lights for her.

She was then called to a larger church as the associate pastor. The church housed a staff of seven including senior, associate, Sunday school superintendent, parish nurse, administrator, receptionist, and custodian, as well as a couple of part time musicians. We met weekly for two-hour staff meetings. The staff reported to each other on what they

were working on and how things were going, as well as sharing pastoral concerns, but there was more coordination than collaboration.

The associate led the youth group, taught confirmation, created a contemporary worship service, led the evangelism team, and attended a vast array of general pastoral duties. For the first year the pastors shared the leadership of the traditional worship services, diving in the liturgy, and the associate preached about once a month. She led seven work camps and mission trips, she helped grow the church, she led a successful youth group, and tried to fulfill the calling she had accepted.

The senior pastor was in his sixties and had been serving for forty years, including eighteen at this parish. Conflicts arose when the associate started the contemporary worship service, and began preaching every week, as stated in her contract. The associate was asked not to lead worship so often, and not to work so much.

She had served there six months when she hit the stained glass ceiling. By fulfilling her contract, she had threatened the hierarchy of this system. This situation created a pervasive tension.

She stayed for four years. When she left she felt she had given her best against exhaustive resistance. There had to be a better way of working together than a hierarchy of rivals.

She went from there to another small rural church, then to a pair of yoked churches, all of which had little or no staff. She missed the team experience, but imagined it to be a rich sharing and a friendly collegial experience, where people could serve according to their gifts, helping each other as life and parish life ebbed and flowed.

When she started at Windsor UCC, it was as a sabbatical replacement. Then the church decided to keep her and her title changed to Associate in Ministry. There was no job description. Then the church issued a call as Associate Pastor. There is still no job description. It was decided to let it develop organically, according to the gifts she brings and the needs of the church.

The staff arrangement was streamlined: senior pastor, Sunday school superintendent, music director, and secretary. However, there was more overlap among staff and jobs to do than before. Pastors and musicians helped with vacation Bible school, the children's musical, and Christmas programs. Everyone on staff and many from the congregation shared the custodial responsibilities for the church; there was no staff custodian. Everyone contributed to worship planning.

Yet there were still some of the traditional interpretations of the associate pastor alive and well. One person refused to let the associate officiate at her husband's funeral even though the senior pastor was on vacation. The senior pastor is requested exclusively to officiate at weddings.

But something is different. In this situation both pastors know that either one could do it all. That is not what is wanted, so things are divided differently. When one is out of town, the other covers it all. One is not training the other. No one is threatened by the other's work.

The church has a long history of short pastorates. In fact, during its first twenty-five years the church had twelve different pastors. The longest serving pastor stayed fourteen years, with the majority between three and five years. The regular turn over contributed to a feeling of tension in the congregation, which became part of the church's

reputation. The anxiety became part of the system. When pastors arrived, they were suspect. One pastor in history was asked to leave after going to a bowling alley. One pastor was asked to leave the church after becoming mentally ill. One pastor feared making people angrier than they already were, and so his leadership was more aimed at keeping the peace. Most pastors avoided the most pressing problem of expanding building space because the congregation resisted the process. It seems that over the years the congregation learned not to trust their leaders.

It is possible, in the case of four out of five of the last pastors, that a supportive colleague in the parish would have enhanced, stabilized, and possibly lengthened their ministries. One pastor who was formal and reserved almost to the point of being tentative could have benefitted from someone to facilitate social events and fun things to do, or someone to spearhead a building project, or someone to provide a more active vision while he focused on the pastoral care.

Another pastor who was charismatic and gregarious but struggled with mental illness could have used a trusted colleague to be someone to lean on during difficult times, someone to fill in while healing took place, and even someone to help keep him steady during the tumult.

One pastor who was brought in as a healer could have used support in that role, first of all, as it was exhausting work, and also support for a church that grew beyond what one pastor can manage. She could have used someone to fill in while she rested from the healing work, allowing for a possible shift in her ministry from someone who heals the church to someone who grows the church, for example.

And finally, one pastor could have used a colleague during a period of congregational turmoil when all other sources of support turned their backs on him and refused to offer support or assistance. This pastor who has remarkably stayed the course through a building project and a triangle of adulterous behavior came to the same point of preparing to leave, and when a supportive colleague was hired, decided to stay.

In each case, a time came in the pastorate when no more could be done on the pastor's own. The balance of energy had tipped too far to one side in the first three examples, too placid, too frantic, too tired, and too alienated for too long. It is possible that the pastors could have extended their ministries with the right kind of collaboration.

Effective church leadership includes different methods of collaboration. Sometimes collaboration is between two people, like Simon and Garfunkel: one writes the music and one writes the lyrics, or one sings the melody and the other sings harmony. In each case, the song is enhanced by the capable, contributing presence of each of the artists. There is a synergy between people when they work together with a common cause, often resulting in a wealth of artistic or spiritual riches. This kind of collaborative partnership allows each person to draw on his or her gifts and skills from a position of strength without being singly responsible for the whole.

Other collaborations can be among small groups of people, like the team of doctors in a group. Each has all the basic skills, as well as a specialty or two. As emergencies and special needs are attended, any available doctor can meet the needs of the patients with general concerns. There is always someone to fill in, pick up the slack, or take the lead for a time. Whereas the patient may not always know who will be attending the birth of their baby, for example, they will be familiar with all the doctors

and understand they are all capable professionals who share the responsibilities of care and service.

Finally, other collaborations can be like a team of huskie dogs racing the Iditarod. They rotate leadership and supportive positions based on the terrain, their experience, and their energy at the time. Some dogs are naturally bold leaders, fearless and curious about what new bend lies around the next corner. Other dogs remember part of the trail from last year and can lead through storms and white outs. When one dog has led through a tough part of the trail, another takes over while that one rests. Some teams actually carry an old dog along with them for the times when only years of experience will carry them through. Although the raw strength has passed, the wisdom acquired is invaluable. There is no possible way one dog could run that race by itself. The teamwork of shared leadership is required.

In the first example, the two artists work together writing lyrics and music that go well together, using their voices together to enhance their art form. In the second example, each member of the medical team shares the workload that is more than one person could handle, they share the duties to keep the schedule manageable, and each takes their turn being on call. And in the third example, a leadership rotation is set up based on the needs at the time. Any one of these models could benefit a system that has been solely relying on one person's leadership.

Currently Windsor United Church of Christ is in as good a place as it has ever been. The current senior pastor was called in 2001, and under his patient guidance and visionary leadership, the congregation has accomplished a major building project and resolved some destructive internal issues. This has resulted in the church having a new

lease on life. Members of the congregation describe the church as being in its adolescence or its prime. The people who did not like the current leadership have left, and that has had a calming effect as well. The staff is experienced and they enjoy working together.

When the senior pastor recently examined whether it was time to move on or stay put, he discerned God's continued call to him to stay. Yet he is less attached to traditional roles and more open to sharing responsibilities in ways that work for everyone. There is a strong sense of supportive collegiality.

This is a place that will continue to flourish, to grow, and to share the joy and strife of parish ministry. It is the researcher's hope that as we discern how our gifts are best used, our work will be immensely satisfying personally and fruitful within the congregation. It seems too obvious for words, but using the gifts God has given is a more faithful response to a call than fulfilling a hierarchical job description. As our gifts are allowed to develop, we will be able to work more and more collaboratively, sharing the work of the kingdom for the good of all.

In the church, our theology forms the framework on which we hang our beliefs. Feminist theology can help people think of ways of opening doors to service that might traditionally remain closed. If God is calling women to be whole human beings and to use all the gifts God has given them, some women in particular might need encouragement, guidance or even permission to extend themselves for the good of the church. The lesson is the same for men, of course; to break down whatever barrier is keeping them from serving in the ways God has called them, according to their gifts, not tradition or a previously prescribed way of doing things. God routinely liberates people from captivity,

whether it is captivity to a belief system, a tradition, or a job description. Yet feminist liberation theology asserts that God wants us all to be free to live lives full of joy and abundant joy at that. We should be free to use the gifts we have been given.

In the story of Joseph, using the gifts of his visions was what got him in trouble with his brothers. They did not like it when he used his non-traditional gifts. They threw him down a well, and sold him into slavery. However, it was also Joseph's visions and dream interpretation, used in collaboration with the Pharaoh, that led to his liberation and the prospect of helping people through seven years of famine. If his job description had been limited to just youngest brother, head of the jail, or even cook's assistant, he never would have had the chance to serve as God intended.

In the church, women often serve in the same areas: Sunday school, pastoral care, food preparation, childcare, and secretarial. It is possible to expand women's ministry, acceptance and leadership in the church. Working collaboratively should allow staff to draw upon their gifts and lead to a more satisfying work experience, longer tenures, stability for the church and the pastors' families, and a congregation which is able to concentrate on following Jesus Christ instead of calling another pastor.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

When examining the need for associate pastors' ministries to become more fulfilling and stable, it is important to critique passages from the Bible that reveal successful models for associate ministry. This chapter includes examination of two stories from the Bible that reveal legitimate, Spirit-led, and faithful calls to associate pastors. These scriptures focus on people who are called by God to serve in conjunction with another, thereby strengthening the whole system. By examining these passages, Biblical models for successful associate pastorates are revealed.

This is important to understand because associate pastors generally are seen as disposable staff. The average tenure of an associate pastor in mainline denominations is only three to four years. The associates are usually younger, less experienced, and far more transient than their senior counterparts. Job satisfaction is low and the turnover rate is high. This is detrimental to the church, the associate pastor, and the associate pastor's family.

Associate pastorates do not have to be just stepping stones to solo pastor careers, or simply pick up jobs of doing whatever the senior pastor does not want to do. These callings can be to specific positions, responsible for a particular task, that contribute to

the vision of ministry shared by all staff members. With a faithful call from God, the recognition of gifts and skills, responsibility and the tools to carry out a plan, an associate pastor can find fulfillment and stability in ministry.

The Bible offers several models of associate ministry, both general and specific. The passages below showcase highly effective models of collaborative ministry. One shows the importance of a specialist: when the associate takes responsibility for an area in which the senior may not have skills; and the importance of a generalist: when the associate trains under the senior pastor in order to continue a similar legacy at another church.

Briefly, in Genesis 41:38-40, Joseph has interpreted dreams for Pharaoh foretelling the years of drought and famine to come. Pharaoh recognizes leadership qualities in Joseph and puts him in charge of wheat and grain collecting and dispersing to alleviate the crisis. In Titus 1:4-5, Paul has left Titus behind on an island to help the islanders establish their first Christian church. Titus was asked to finish Paul's new church plant. It is a demanding job, but Paul raised Titus in the faith and encourages him to continue boldly in ministry in this passage.

When associates claim their role as a legitimate call from God, utilize skills or acquire expertise in a specialized area, and take responsibility for a particular area of ministry, their capacity for satisfaction and joy increases, their tenure extends, and the ministry flourishes.

Old Testament Scripture

Genesis 41:38-40 (New Revised Standard Version)

Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find anyone else like this—one in whom is the spirit of God?” So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command; only with regard to the throne will I be greater than you.”

The story of Joseph is told in Genesis, chapters 37-50. It is framed by his birth and death, and contains his early dreams, his fall from grace to slave and prisoner, his elevation to high estate, his methods of saving the people of Egypt and their neighbors, and the reconciliation of his family.

Joseph was the eleventh son of Jacob and Rachel. He was one of two children born to Jacob’s favorite wife. Although he was favored by his father, he was despised by his brothers. God spoke to him through dreams. His first dream was of twelve sheaves, eleven of which bowed down before the other. His second dream was of eleven stars bowing down before the sun. His brothers did not appreciate his insights and threw him down a well, then sold him to an Egyptian as a slave. Joseph was sexually harassed by his superior’s wife, falsely accused of inappropriate dealing with her and was thrown in prison.¹ While there, he became head prisoner and interpreted dreams for the cupbearer and the baker. When Pharaoh had a dream and none of the magicians or wise men could provide a satisfactory explanation, Joseph was summoned from prison to interpret for him. He did so and provided wisdom and council and was appointed second in command

¹ Christiana De Groot, “Genesis” in *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary*, Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds., (Downer’s Grove, IL; Intervarsity Press, 2002), page 26.

to Pharaoh. Joseph saved the country from famine and brought his family back together when they needed food.

This pericope in chapter 41 represents the apex in the Joseph story. Joseph has just interpreted Pharaoh's dream about the cows and ears of corn and declares that seven productive years will be followed by seven years of famine and drought. Joseph suggests that provisions be made to survive the impending famine. Pharaoh is amazed, pleased, and relieved that he has received an answer and a plan. Pharaoh recognizes the "spirit of God" in Joseph.

The "spirit of God" is what sets Joseph apart and what catches Pharaoh's eye. Pharaoh addresses the court, asking them if there is anyone else like this with the spirit of God in them. Since Joseph is the one on whom the spirit of God rests, Pharaoh elevates him to second-in-command.

This passage of scripture illuminates the importance of the "spirit of God" being with a person. The word "spirit" in Hebrew is "ruah," which is also translated into Greek as "pneuma." This "spirit of God" becomes the very essence of the Holy Spirit we come to know on Pentecost. This "ruah" indicates something being poured out, like moving air, or a substance in liquid form. It is also defined as winds that blow, as that which brings the dead to life, and gives a new heart. "Ruah" is also understood to be a means of divine judgment, announcing God's coming.² The gift of the spirit's coming can be temporary or permanent. Often the spirit is sent to inspire a small group of people facing enormous opposing powers.

² David Noel Freedman, *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 263.

The spirit can be described in two Hebrew phrases. “Ruah elohim” means “spirit of God” whereas “Ruah Yahweh” means “Spirit of the Lord.”³ In this context, the reference to “Ruah elohim” points to the authorship being Elohistic and connects Joseph to other prophets who have experienced similar spiritual manifestations of prophecy. The spirit of God rests on or in the one who is then blessed. Sometimes anointing and laying on of hands confirms the spiritual act. David Freedman found that “the gift of the spirit and blessing become related concepts.”⁴ The one who receives the spirit also receives prophecies, vision and dreams. But, the spirit in a person is subject to the rule of God. God accomplishes God’s purposes by intervening through chosen people with the spirit.⁵

The spirit of God came with certain characteristics. It often brought wisdom and perspective. Wisdom was frequently seen as one of the gifts of God’s spirit.⁶ Joseph foreshadows Pharaoh’s selection in verse 33 by saying, “Let Pharaoh select a man who is discerning and wise.” Pharaoh responds in turn in verse 38 saying, “There is no one so discerning and wise as you.”

In Hebrew the word for wisdom can be represented as “hkm,” and is commonly spelled “hokmah.” The common definition of “hokmah” includes both understanding and skill. The Hebrew term for wisdom appears 318 times in the Old Testament. Wisdom represents the knowledge between right and wrong, when to take action and when to stay still, and when to accept things as they are and when to strive for change. This is a term

³ Freedman, 262.

⁴ Freedman, 263.

⁵ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 599.

⁶ Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Bible Commentary: Genesis 16-18* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1994), 394.

frequently associated with professional consultants such as diviners and magicians, sometimes called “wise men.” Having wisdom meant that one had skills, one was clever or cunning, and one knew how and when to take practical action.⁷

Scholars have also interpreted wisdom to mean even more than that. Feminist biblical scholars interpret hokmah as a female emanation of God.⁸ The Hebrew word “hokmah” is translated “sophia” in Greek, and both words can be translated to mean wisdom or “Holy Wisdom.” Both “hokmah” and “sophia” are grammatically feminine words. Scriptures that use these words broaden our understanding of God’s spirit to include feminine images. They also broaden our concept of what feminine images are to include the work of the divine.

Feminist wisdom spirituality is referenced in scripture from both Old and New Testaments. Wisdom was known to guide and direct people of any social class in their decisions in daily life, but also directed community leaders and high-ranking people. Feminist biblical scholar Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza found that Wisdom references came into literature as the household began to replace the royal line as leaders of the community.⁹ In the book of Proverbs, Wisdom is presented as a teacher, present with God at creation, preparing a feast, and building a house. Wisdom guides and performs household duties of a managerial nature. This is exactly what Pharaoh asked Joseph to do: take care of the household on behalf of the monarchy. Lady Wisdom was also

⁷ Freedman, 920.

⁸ Ruth Duck, *Praising God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 99.

⁹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation” (Maryknoll NY, Orbis Books, 2001), page 35.

frequently reported as the one who replaced the king as the advocate and interpreter between God and the people. This was also Joseph's job.

In the apocryphal book the Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom was known to have a saving nature. In one passage, Wisdom is said to save humanity from a flood, bringing the oppressed out of Egypt and drowning the enemies, as in the story of Moses parting the Red Sea (Wisd. Sol. 10:18-19). In the passage from Genesis, Wisdom contributes to the saving of Egypt through Joseph by guiding the food saving and sharing.¹⁰

Feminist theologian Elizabeth Johnson suggests that Wisdom is not a separate deity or fourth person of the trinity, nor a feminine companion to God as in Mr. and Mrs. God, but the Spirit of Wisdom is present in all three persons of the trinity. She proposes that the Holy Spirit or Spirit of God and Wisdom together are how God lives most closely with the world, infusing each living being with life force and a love of community. Jesus and Wisdom are referenced by gospel writers to be one and the same: Logos and Sophia are Word and Wisdom come together. God and wisdom together are the living source of all that exists. Johnson refers to God as Mother of the universe, but at the same time acknowledges that both Mother and Father are necessary for life to begin.¹¹

Pharaoh recognizes that Joseph has the Spirit of God, and wisdom. These gifts are exactly what Joseph needs to help Pharaoh run the household of his kingdom, keep Egypt and all the neighboring nations alive, re-unite his own family, and stay connected to God.

The spirit of God led Joseph to this place. Joseph's rise in power is the fulfillment of his childhood dreams as well as the dreams of the Pharaoh. Both leaders shared the

¹⁰ Ruth Duck and Patricia Wilson-Kastner, page 101.

¹¹ Elizabeth A., Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1992), 64.

same vision, and it is here that it becomes reality. Joseph's dream interpretation for Pharaoh revealed how the spirit of God was with him, and this is rewarded in Joseph's elevation and promotion. No longer will Joseph be dismissed, sold into slavery, thrown in prison, wrongly accused, overlooked, or forgotten. He is now second only to the Pharaoh. And it is all due to his faithfulness and willingness to let the spirit of God work through him.

Throughout the story, Joseph gives credit to God. As the tale unfolds, this continues. As the family becomes reconciled, Joseph attributes the direction of events to God again and again. The spirit of God led Joseph not just to assist Pharaoh in avoiding the famine, but also in reconciling his family and providing for their livelihood for the rest of their lives.

Whereas elsewhere in the Bible this spirit is the source of calamity or ecstasy,¹² in this case the spirit of God aids Joseph in divine illumination and intellectual power. Joseph attributed his dream interpretation to God again and again (Gen 41: 16, 25, 22, 32). God had blessed Joseph with gifts of vision and faith, and the narrator makes it clear, "The Lord was with him, and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper" (Gen 39:23). Joseph's faithfulness was a blessing to Pharaoh.

The spirit of God provided Joseph with skills and a plan. Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream and followed it up with a step-by-step plan on how to avoid catastrophe. He did not volunteer to supervise the plan, but Pharaoh recognized in Joseph faithfulness to the spirit of God and called him to serve. Pharaoh put him in charge of surviving the famine; and in this area of specialty, Joseph had full responsibility. Although Pharaoh

¹² Cuthbert A. Simpson, "The Book of Genesis: Exegesis" in General and Old Testament Articles, Genesis, Exodus, vol. I of *The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press-Cokesbury, 1952), 777.

knew many things, as Brueggeman suggests, “He knows how to prosper and how to oppress. But he does not know how to discern the movement of God’s way within his realm. Only God knows that, and only Joseph does God’s work in this situation.”¹³ Pharaoh ruled in his realm, but Joseph was given responsibility because Pharaoh recognized the spirit of God in him, and they served collaboratively.

The “spirit of God” is mentioned elsewhere in the Bible revealing different shades of meanings. With Gideon and Saul the “spirit of God” seems to give them great strength (Judges 6:34, I Samuel 11:6). The “spirit of God” rests on Moses and on Saul once again as a source of prophecy (Numbers 11:25, 1 Samuel 10:6). Joel’s prophecy includes the phrase, “Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...”(Joel 2:28).¹⁴ In Joseph’s case, Pharaoh says he sees in him the “spirit of God” which refers to his divinely inspired dream interpretation and also the clarity and efficiency of his plan to avoid disaster.

Joseph proposes that Pharaoh consider the hiring of a wise person to oversee the Egyptian economy and provide measures for enduring the famine. Although he clearly acknowledges submission to Pharaoh and the authority of Pharaoh’s decisions each time he uses the word “Let....”, Joseph must have hoped to be chosen. Pharaoh addresses the court in conversation so they will accept his proposal and calls Joseph to serve. Joseph remains silent, so Pharaoh continues with his speech and the act of naming Joseph the prime minister in charge of economics of palace and country. This is a particularly unlimited command he has been given. Joseph shall rule with his “yishaq” or mouth, or

¹³ Walter Brueggeman, *Interpretation: Genesis* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1982), 332.

¹⁴ Simpson, 778.

more likely interpreted as by his commands, and there shall be no rebellion. Finally Joseph is given a new name, “Zaphenath-paneah,” which means, “God speaks and lives.”¹⁵

In his new role, Joseph will hold the power of life and death over Egypt, and over his brothers, the two groups of people who formerly oppressed him.¹⁶ When Joseph shows mercy and compassion not only to his family and the Egyptians but also their neighbors, he is the ideal power figure in his position as the vizier of Egypt. By drawing upon the gifts of wisdom imparted to him through the spirit of God, Joseph turns times of strife for both family and country into times of commitment.¹⁷

Joseph remained theocentric throughout his dream interpretation career. Again and again he gave credit where he believed it was due: to God. The spirit of God is revealed as the real provider in this story. It could be said that Joseph may not have understood the dreams, but God did and gave the words to Joseph. Perhaps God also gave Joseph the plan to help the people avoid disaster when famine came. And God’s creation brought forth what food there was that came from the earth. More than any of those things, though, God’s will triumphs over the chaos and violence of human activities. Joseph lived and worked according to the prayer, God’s will be done.

Pharaoh is convinced that God has spoken, and now Pharaoh must act. What to be done is Pharaoh’s decision, but Joseph encourages him not to resign himself to a disastrous fate, but to make a plan to endure the coming hardship as well as possible for

¹⁵ Terence E. Fretheim, “Genesis,” in *Introduction, Commentary and Reflections*, vol. I of *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 622.

¹⁶ Freedman, 977.

¹⁷ Freedman, 981.

the benefit of the nation and its economy. Although Joseph has stressed the direct relationship between God and Pharaoh, the Egyptian monarch seems more convinced that the stronger connection was between God and Joseph, who acted as mediator. And so Pharaoh declares that Joseph is the one on whom the spirit of God rests. It should be noted that God certainly could have spoken to Pharaoh directly. But God allowed Joseph to play this crucial role in the salvation of Egypt and the reconciliation of his family.

The raising of Joseph by the spirit of God is inspiring to those who seek to be elevated, but it is even more amazing upon examination of his early years. He rises from weakness to strength. Joseph had been left for dead, sold as slave, accused and imprisoned, and taken captive in a foreign land. God took each of these events and reversed them, raising Joseph in faithfulness with every step. God did not take a leader and raise him higher; God took Joseph at his lowest and raised him to second in command.

When Pharaoh summoned Joseph, it was from the pit that he came. He was given clean clothes and a shave before appearing to Pharaoh. Joseph is able to provide a satisfactory interpretation for Pharaoh's dream when all the other specialists Pharaoh had called could not. Joseph bested Egypt's experts. God delivered Joseph through the lowest points in his life to the highest, and the weak prevail over the strong. Because of Joseph's faithfulness, Pharaoh's Egypt is saved. Joseph, led by the spirit of God, saves Pharaoh.

Joseph is a wisdom hero. He lived faithfully by the type of advice given in the book of Proverbs. He presented a consistent "almost-too-honest" truthfulness that can only come from faith in God. The story of his life suggests that if someone has the Spirit

of the Lord, and lives wisely, they can rise to become part of the leadership for God's kingdom.¹⁸

This passage instructs that expert assistance can be extremely valuable to even great leaders. Having an area of expertise makes an associate more valuable. Being able to implement a course of action based on a clear and concise plan increases their usefulness again. But faithfulness to the spirit of God is the key to trusting in those skills and gifts and confidently asserting them. The spirit of God calls associate pastors to collaborative leadership.

Just as this pericope from Genesis highlights the elevation of a leader, the passage from Titus also reveals the raising of a leader, but in a slightly different way. In Genesis, the focus was on how the spirit of God led Joseph to help Pharaoh in a specific area of need. In Titus, he was left to serve in an entirely different place, to further establish the new church start that Paul had planted. While Joseph was called to a position of second in command, Titus was left to be the minister of a satellite church, the new branch office, under Paul's umbrella. Paul had trained Titus in the faith and selected Titus to build this seedling church into a stable entity.

New Testament Scripture

Titus 1:4-5 (NRSV)

To Titus, my loyal child in the faith we share: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be done, and should appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

¹⁸ Susan Niditch, "Genesis" in *Women's Bible Commentary*, Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, ed., (Westminster John Knox Press; Louisville, KY, 1998), page 28-29.

Paul wrote this letter to Titus to encourage him and the church on Crete. The letter outlines a strong endorsement of Titus to carry out Paul's work and includes specific instructions for the neophytes comprising the new church start in a challenging place. Paul uses powerful language to convey the weight of his instructions to Titus and the church and gives Titus full authority in this satellite branch. This passage provides another model of associate pastor as collaborator.

Paul was the expert church planter, but he needed other people with the same spirit yet different skill sets to organize and solidify the new churches. Paul the apostle needed someone with administrative gifts, follow-through, and a clear understanding of the faith to make sure the basics and the hierarchical church structure he had established stayed in place even after he moved on.¹⁹ Paul needed someone to help people grow in their faith, someone experienced who would not be swayed by challenges that arose. Paul needed someone of the same spirit with different gifts. Paul chose Titus.

This letter addressed to Titus is usually grouped with the two letters to Timothy, together often called the Pastoral Epistles. It has more similarities with the first letter to Timothy than the second, and historically it may have been written between them. Timothy and Titus were both Greeks who had converted to follow Paul. Just as Timothy has been left at Ephesus, Titus is left on Crete.

Until the eighteenth century, it was assumed that Paul wrote all three documents. Since then, there is more agreement that Paul probably did not write any of them, at least not in their entirety. But questions remain. It is tenable that Paul or a student wrote them,

¹⁹ Joanna Dewey, "Titus" in *Women's Bible Commentary*, Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, ed., (Westminster John Knox Press; Louisville, KY, 1998), page 452.

but more likely that Paul and a student joined together or wove pieces of documents together.²⁰ There are some short sections which sound very Pauline and some longer stretches in a slightly different style.²¹ One must remember that Paul was the master of knowing his mission field and tailoring his letters to his audience. It is possible that some literary changes may have been added to increase effectiveness to the intended audience.

The situation in Crete was a difficult one. There were many challenges for Paul and Titus. They may have been biased against Cretans from the beginning. It is reported in Titus 1:12b that “‘Cretans are always liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons,’ that testimony is true.” This was a famed and often quoted hexameter verse from Epimenides that had always enraged Greeks. There were also competing forces for the religious alliance of the residents. Cretans upheld religious legends of gods and goddesses proudly. There was also a largely Jewish population that mingled freely with the Cretans. They may have been resistant to the salvific message of Jesus Christ.²² Paul insisted that all of these non-Christian voices must be silenced, as both pagan and Jewish men and women were disrupting entire families. Furthermore, throughout Cretan history, women had been respected and revered. They shared with men in social, athletic, and cultural activities. Goddesses were an important part of their tradition, lore, and rituals.²³ Now they were being asked to follow a more hierarchical model. We can deduce from this book that

²⁰ Edward P. Blair, *Abingdon Bible Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1975), 312.

²¹ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 445.

²² William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000), 383.

²³ Catherine Clark Kroeger, “Titus” in *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary*, Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds., (Downer’s Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2002), page 754-757.

while in Crete Paul planted some house churches that he felt needed ongoing organization and guidance.

And so Paul begins this letter to Titus on Crete. It is generally accepted that it was not written as a personal letter to Titus, certainly not in response to a letter of Titus's own.²⁴ It is commonly assumed that the designated audience was the new congregation on Crete, who was struggling with its organization, its faith, its newly appointed leader, and his authority. Paul wrote this letter to arm Titus with his endorsement, to establish Titus as the trustworthy faith leader, and to increase Paul's own authority, and therefore Titus's, as being from God.²⁵ Paul wrote to encourage Titus and to gird him so that he could bear the great burden of leading this struggling community in the faith.

After a heavy-handed introduction in which Paul claims the double authority of both servant and apostle of God, he then personalizes his letter in his address to Titus, "My true child in a common faith." It is a similar greeting to what he offers Timothy, "My loyal child in the faith" (1 Tim 1:2). Paul is emphasizing Titus's devotion and the closeness of their relationship as teacher and student. If Paul were the rabbi, Titus would be taught everything Paul knew, so as to carry it forward. Paul believed Titus had the power of the spirit with him. Paul is also lifting up Titus's excellent personal qualities, in stark contrast to the Cretans' less desirable ways. Paul calls him "my loyal child in the faith," as opposed to "many insubordinate men" in verse 10. Paul believed that Titus had the power of the Spirit with him.

Next Paul Christianizes a standard Greek greeting: "Grace and peace from God

²⁴ William Pringle, "Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon," in vol. XXI of *Calvin's Commentaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), 277.

²⁵ Pringle, 277-278.

the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.” Following this greeting there is usually a section offering thanks for shared ministry, or gifts, or God, but in this case Paul gets right to the point.

Paul says that he “left [Titus] behind in Crete,” which suggests that Paul had been there and had to leave before the work was done. But there is a little word play between “left you” and “remaining things” which have similar root words in Greek. The verb in Greek is “apoleipo” which means “to cause or permit to remain in a place upon going away and thus to leave behind.”²⁶ “Apoleipo” implies that the “being left behind” was temporary, rather than permanent. The things that “remained to be done” are described by the word “leipo,” which can also mean “the things that are wanting,” or “the things that are deficient, lacking, that fall short.”²⁷ The root of each word is the same, and Paul would have intended the connection to be made that Titus was “left behind” for “remaining things.”

There are two verbs that are the hinge pins of Titus’s instructions, and they are related. The first is “should put in order” and the second is “should appoint.” They are in the same mode and one follows the other. The first in Greek is “epidiorthoo.” This is the only use of this word in all of early Christian literature. Definitions of this word include “should set right,” “might put right,” and “should put in order.” This phrase “you might put right” is used as an active verb, which as William Mounce says, “may suggest that the burden is on Titus to set things right.”²⁸ The “epi” prefix can mean “after” or “further”

²⁶ Mounce, 385.

²⁷ Mounce, 386.

²⁸ Mounce, 384.

which adds the nuance of “should set in order further,” or “should complete unfinished reform,” or even “to correct in addition to what has already been corrected.”²⁹ This suggests that either the reform in Crete was long term, ongoing, or especially difficult.

The second verb in Greek is “*kathistemi*,” which is usually translated “appoint.” Titus is commanded by Paul to “appoint elders.” This word can also mean, “bring, ordain, make (someone) to become something.”³⁰ The literal meaning is probably “set down.”³¹ In this case, the instruction carries out Paul’s tradition of appointing elders in each new church start. The word for elders in Greek is “*presbuteros*” which can be translated as elders, presbyters, priests, or deacons. In short, Titus is charged with appointing leaders in the church who will continue teaching a strong faith and defend the faithful from threats and moral degradation.

In general, the letter encourages Titus to continue to focus on the basics of faith: appoint qualified elders, challenge false teaching, pass on pure doctrine, and remember the importance of doing good works. This letter is also a teaching document for the church, in that there are instructions as to what Titus should teach. It is hard to believe that Titus would need that reminder.³² Similarly, later in the letter Paul includes reminders for women not to drink too much and for young women to love their husbands and children. These are more likely teaching points that reflect the major differences between a pagan life of sin and the new life found in Jesus Christ.³³

²⁹ Mounce, 387.

³⁰ Bromiley, 215-216.

³¹ Bromiley, 216.

³² Pringle, 277.

Titus first appeared as a convert, a student and a companion of Paul. Paul brought Titus, the model student, along with him as he traveled as a testament to his missionary accomplishments.³⁴ Titus was mentioned regularly throughout records of Paul's travels as being the one Paul sought. Titus was an encouraging and strengthening presence, a successful collector of tithes and offerings both in Corinth and in Jerusalem, and the deliverer of Paul's letters to the churches, and the churches' reaction to them.³⁵ Most significantly, however, is Paul's commendation of Titus as "my partner and co-worker in your service" (2 Cor 8:23).³⁶ Paul's contact with Titus was regular, and their work together was in partnership. Clearly, Titus was a trusted companion and a skillful leader.

It is clear that Paul regards Titus as a person of genuine faith who had converted through Paul's ministry. It is also apparent that Paul was Titus's teacher, guide and leader, that Titus depended on Paul, and that they shared a greater dependence on God (2 Cor 8:23). Titus was described as a stalwart and a faithful minister. He was someone on whom Paul could depend.

Paul's call to Titus to serve on Crete points to a fundamental feature of Paul's own calling. Paul felt he had been given a special commissioning to make the message of the gospel known. He was steeped in the confidence of Christian hope. He was rooted in divine purpose. He was walking the line between bringing history to the current time and expecting with a certain immediacy the second coming of the divine.

³³ Johnson, 446.

³⁴ Fred D. Gealy and Morgan P. Noyes, "Titus: Text, Exegesis, and Exposition," in *Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Pastoral Epistles, Philemon, Hebrews*, vol. 9 of *The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press-Cokesbury, 1952), 525.

³⁵ Blair, 312.

³⁶ Gealy and Noyes, 525

And so, when Paul commissions someone to “set right” a new church start, he extends a call of that same intensity to him. They become another link in the chain from Jesus into the future. He has not simply trained a robot to imitate his words and acts; he has seen God in Jesus Christ come alive in another person and calls that person to share that spirit. The passing of the ministerial baton from rabbi to rabbi was like a spiritual begetting. All that was in Paul would now be shared through Titus. Bringing people into a salvific faith in Jesus Christ would require awakening their faith, equipping them with knowledge and teaching them how to live a truly religious life. Titus was sent to do that.

When Paul was heading to Jerusalem, where people were suspicious of him and prepared to dislike him, he took Titus with him. When the trouble at Corinth was at a peak and Paul wrote one of his most severe letters, he sent it with Titus. When Paul needed someone to organize the collection at Jerusalem for the poor, he asked Titus. Titus must have had strength of mind and toughness of character to face contrary people and handle the situations that came up no matter how difficult. He got the job done again and again. He could bring order out of chaos and peace out of trouble. So Titus was sent to places where there was strife.

On Crete, Paul asks Titus to be an example to the people there, or a pattern for them to follow, or someone to emulate as they learned how to live their faith. Paul did not ask Titus to preach. He asked him not to tell them but to show them how to live. Titus had the heart of a pastor who could complete the organization of the church at Crete and protect it from outside threats to doctrine and teachings. Titus also had the willingness to serve faithfully “in the shadow of more prominent people.”³⁷

³⁷ Bromiley, 864.

This pericope reveals the need to call upon someone with the same spirit but a different set of skills to help in a specific area. The associate in this case is assigned the satellite church, the branch office, or the problem area, to organize and establish the newly planted gospel. The associate is fully endorsed and supported by the senior pastor. The senior has in fact trained the associate and launched her or him into service to solve some specific problems when the senior cannot be in two places at once or do everything that needs to be done. The associate is tried and tested and then assigned a task to which their abilities are suited. The baton is passed, and responsibility is taken on. There is a special commissioning for the job to be done, and the ministry is rooted in the divine calling that the servants share.

We can glean some important insights into successful associate pastorates from these scriptures. First, it is critical that the Spirit of the Lord is with the associate and that God call him or her to this ministry. The associate must be faithful enough to answer the call and wise enough to stay faithful to the call. It is necessary for the associate and senior to share the same vision for ministry as well. Second, it is helpful that the associate develop an area of expertise and that he or she take responsibility for this area. An endorsement from a senior can be instrumental in the success of an associate pastorate.

These passages from the Bible reveal successful collaborative ministries in which the associate pastor functions with faithfulness, expertise, and responsibility, aiding in the expanding and strengthening of the kingdom. Each shows autonomy and is blessed with an endorsement and authority. The combination of a shared vision for ministry and the autonomy with which to serve faithfully and well is significant progress toward fulfillment and stability.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

Inside and outside of the church, American women are attaining leadership roles in more areas than ever before. More and more, women are participating and contributing in fields traditionally dominated by men, including the pulpit and the boardroom. There are now laws requiring that equal consideration be given to women applying for jobs and that they get paid an equal amount as a man. Women are finding places at the tables previously reserved for men only, and their voices are making a difference.

However, there are still areas in which women are not yet present or welcome. We have not yet had a woman President, Vice President, Joint Chief of Staff, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Director of the CIA, FBI, or NSA, White House Chief of Staff, Secretary of Treasury or Secretary of Defense, for example. Women are underrepresented in government, politics, business, finance, academia and science. They are also present to only a small degree in areas of accounting, computing, information technology, law enforcement, emergency services, professional cooking, sports commentary, mathematics, and construction. However, there have been some moments when women have opened the door to a room filled only with men, stepped through and joined in. Since the suffrage movement, women have increasingly entered fields where they had previously not been welcome. This is a brief chronological survey of the times

when women have first found a place at the table in the areas of government and politics, business and finance, and academia with particular emphasis on science. It is important to name some of the groundbreaking women who were the first in their field to achieve a role previously held only by men, and see how they accomplished so much, despite long standing resistance.

Using the date of women's achieving the right to vote as a beginning point, this document will trace some of women's first accomplishments throughout American history in the fields of government and politics, business and finance, and academia and science. The right to vote stands as an example of a valuable area in which women's voices were not just unwelcome but categorically and intentionally excluded. Earning the right to vote was a watershed moment for American women; however other rights and equalities continued only at a trickle. Even so, since the first Women's Equality Day ninety-three years ago, women have broken through the glass ceiling of leadership in male dominated areas more than ever before.

Women were not silent before they earned the right to vote. Some women were activists, abolitionists, and accomplished leaders in their own right. Frances Elizabeth Willard became the first female college president in 1871 when she served Evanston College.¹ Jeanette Rankin became the first woman to serve in Congress in 1917², the same year that Kate Gleason became the president of a national bank, First National Bank

¹ Heidi Brown, "Women College Presidents' Tough Test," *Forbes.com*, accessed October 25, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/2009/10/06/female-college-presidents-forbes-woman-power-women-tenure.html>.

² Phyllis J. Read and Bernard L. Witlieb, *The Book of Women's Firsts* (New York, NY: Random House Inc., 1992), 260.

of East Rochester.³ The following year the first Fortune 500 list is published, which is a list of the top (largest/most profitable) corporations in the United States; and three women are named as having amassed the largest fortunes: Mrs. E.H. Harriman, the widow of a railroad financier (\$80,000,000), Mrs. Russell Sage, the widow of a robber baron or unscrupulous businessman (\$60,000,000), and Mrs. Lawrence Lewis, who was a descendant and inheritor of the wealth of Henry H. Flagler, who owned Standard Oil and Florida railroads (\$50,000,000).⁴ It is hard to believe that these women were in these positions of leadership and financial responsibility and still were denied the right to vote.

Marie Curie was a trailblazer with her work on radiation. Her accomplishments include developing the first theory of radioactivity (a term that she coined), creating techniques for isolating radioactive isotopes, and the discovery of two elements, polonium and radium. She won her first Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1903 with her husband, Pierre.⁵ It was assumed that the prize was awarded to her husband and that she was his assistant, when actually there was more truth in the opposite. In 1906 her husband died, and she went back to work the day after the funeral. Then Marie was asked to fill her late husband's teaching chair at the Sorbonne, which she did. In 1910, Marie was nominated for admission to the Academy of Science, but her nomination was met with such resistance that a large debate resulted as to whether women should be admitted

³ Read and Witleib, 176.

⁴ Forbes, B.C., "The First Rich List," *Forbes.com*, accessed October 24, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/2002/09/27/0927richest.html>.

⁵ Gina De Angelis, *Female Firsts in their Fields: Science and Medicine* (Philadelphia, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999), 33.

at all. In the end she lost by two votes. She was awarded a second Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1935.⁶ She remains the only woman to receive this award twice.

The right for women to vote in 1920 had an immediate impact. That same year Florence E. Allen was elected judge of the Court of Common Pleas. In 1922 she won a seat on the Ohio Supreme Court and became the first woman to serve on the Supreme Court of any state.⁷

There were additional challenges that followed on the heels of the 19th amendment. In May of 1921 Ruth Hale refused to have a real estate deed transferred to her in her married name of Mrs. Heywood Broun, and the papers were changed to cite her birth name instead. Between 1921 and 1925 Hale and others continued to demand using their birth names instead of their married names to get a passport, to register at a hotel, to have a bank account or sign a check, to have a telephone number, a store account, an insurance policy, a library card, to get a copyright, and to receive their own paychecks. It was formerly held that when men and women married, they became one person. Many of these rights were not granted until October 9, 1972, when a court decision on Women's Name Rights was made.⁸

Some women landed in leadership roles when their husbands died, like Marie Curie. This was a pattern that would continue throughout World War II as women were called to complete the work of their husbands when they died or were sent overseas. In some cases the women continued in the field and were reelected or hired, but not always.

⁶ De Angelis, 35.

⁷ Read and Witleib, 15.

⁸ Read and Witleib, 190.

In 1922 Gov. Hardwick (Georgia) appointed Rebecca Felton as the first woman Senator.⁹ But he did so to appease the women in his state who had recently been empowered by the 19th amendment, even though he opposed women's right to vote. Senator Watson had just died, leaving his seat vacant. Hardwick's first choice was Watson's widow, who refused. And so Hardwick endorsed Felton, who had endorsed Hardwick in his race for governor. She served for one day, during which her successor was elected. She was not pleased. At the swearing in, Felton acknowledged that "...there may be but very few [women senators] in the next few years," but predicted that, "...when the women of the country come in and sit with you . . . you will get ability, you will get integrity of purpose, you will get exalted patriotism, and you will get unstinted usefulness."¹⁰

Hattie Caraway was the next woman Senator in 1931. She fulfilled her husband's term after his death and then ran again and served until 1945.¹¹

President Franklin D. Roosevelt was instrumental in raising women into leadership during his presidency. Frances Perkins became the first woman member of a Presidential Cabinet when FDR appointed her Secretary of Labor in 1933.¹² Nellie Tayloe Ross completed her husband's term as governor after he died and then went on to serve as Committeewoman to the Democratic National Committee, then Vice Chair of the DNC and finally in 1933 Roosevelt appointed her Director of the U.S. Mint, where

⁹ Read and Witleib, 151.

¹⁰ Robert C. Byrd, "The Senate, 1789-1989: Classic Speeches, 1830-1993," Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1994, accessed October 26, 2013, http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/Speeches_Felton.

¹¹ Read and Witleib, 83.

¹² Read and Witleib, 340.

she served until 1953.¹³ The first three women governors all served out the terms their husbands had won. The first woman governor was elected on her own in 1975.¹⁴

With the outbreak of World War II, men were sent overseas, and women were called into the workforce to replace them. Both single and married women found jobs in fields that had previously been closed to women – “as pilots, marines, coast guard members, welders, and electricians.”¹⁵ During World War II about 1000 women became WASPs, or Women Air Force Pilots, and ferried planes from factories to military units, or pulled targets behind their planes for shooting practice. Marines had been almost exclusively men until World War I, when 305 women became “Marinettes.” When World War II broke out, Marine recruiting brochures promised women openings in thirty-four job assignments; but final statistics at the end of the war recorded women in over 225 different specialties, filling eighty-five percent of the enlisted jobs at Headquarters Marine Corps and comprising one-half to two-thirds of the permanent personnel at major Marine Corps posts. They were given no nickname; they were simply Marines. Although the men resumed their previous jobs when they came home, this time of expanded opportunities still opened doors for women.

By 1950, the men had returned from war and most of the women were sent home again. Many became parents in the baby boomer generation. Some women continued to work but only in certain fields. The jobs deemed acceptable for women were nurses,

¹³ George W. Hopper Law Library, “Nellie Tayloe Ross: The First Woman Governor,” accessed October 27, 2013, <http://www.uwyo.edu/lawlib/displaycase/nellietayloeross.html>.

¹⁴ Center for American Women and Politics. “History of Women Governors,” accessed January 13, 2014, http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/levels_of_office/documents/govhistory.pdf.

¹⁵ Jacqueline Ching and Juliet Ching, *Individual Rights and Responsibility: Women's Rights* (New York, NY: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., 2001), 69.

flight attendants, waitresses, and office clerks. But the support for the expansion of women in the workplace was gone. The Women's Trade Union League was dissolved.¹⁶ The work for women's rights slowed, but the work for civil rights continued. Rosa Parks was arrested in 1955. Some women kept on with the fight for equality.

During the 1960's, women began to make strides for equality once again. Journalist Kati Marton described it like this:

In 1963 Betty Friedan published her book *The Feminine Mystique*, in which she claimed that 'the problem that has no name burst like a boil through the image of the happy American housewife.' The same year, an American woman, the physicist Maria Goepper-Mayer, won a Nobel Prize for the first time. The civil rights and antiwar movements politicized and radicalized a growing number of women bombarded with contradictory expectations and images about work and family. While Lesley Gore's hit song 'You Don't Own Me' climbed the charts, *Leave It to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best* dominated television. One in five women with children under six and nearly one-fourth of women whose children were over sixteen held paid jobs in the Sixties. Their pay, however, was 60 percent of the male rate. Though equal pay legislation passed in 1963, that did not solve the problem of low pay in jobs that were classed as female."¹⁷

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission declared that employers could not run segregated ads for women's jobs and men's jobs anymore. Legislation was passed regarding equal pay for equal jobs done by men and women. The development of birth control gave women more control over their bodies and their families. This allowed women to choose career over family if they wanted. The civil rights movement gained power and momentum. Equal rights were being sought in many areas.

President John F. Kennedy asked Eleanor Roosevelt and Esther Perkins to create the President's Commission on the Status of Women. They wrote a sixty page document

¹⁶ Ching and Ching, 72.

¹⁷ Kati Marton, *Hidden Power: Presidential Marriages that Shaped Our Recent History* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 2001), 106.

opposing sex discrimination regarding jury duty, marriage rights and property rights, and called for equality. Kennedy then signed the Equal Pay Act in 1963, which prohibits sex-based wage discrimination and demands equal pay for equal work regardless of sex.¹⁸

That same year, Katharine Graham became the first woman CEO for a Fortune 500 company (The Washington Post).¹⁹ The Washington Post had actually belonged to her father, Graham; and her husband bought it from him. She took over after her husband's death.

In 1964 Margaret Chase Smith became the first woman nominated for President for a major political party (Republican). She lost the nomination to Barry Goldwater. She had already been the first woman to be elected to both the House of Representatives (1940 – after her husband's death, then four more two-year terms) and the U.S. Senate (1948). Smith was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George H.W. Bush in 1989.²⁰

In 1967 Muriel Seibert became the first woman to buy a seat on the New York Stock Exchange. It took two years to get the loan she needed (\$300,000 out of \$445,000) approved. She was the only woman admitted to the Stock Exchange for the next ten years, and she worked with 1,365 men. In 1970 she and her colleagues went to lunch at a New York club. Because she was a woman, she was not allowed to ride in the club's elevator. She took the stairs. When her colleagues found out about this, they all took the stairs back down.²¹

¹⁸ Ching and Ching, 78-79.

¹⁹ Read and Witleib, 182.

²⁰ Read and Witleib, 411.

Seibert found that her resume got more attention when she cited her name as “M.F. Seibert” rather than “Muriel.” Once she had her foot in the door, her employers were always convinced of her competence. But they would not grant her an interview if they knew she was a woman. In 1977 she became the first woman Superintendent for Banking for New York State, appointed by Gov. Hugh Carey.

In 1987 Seibert worked to get a ladies’ bathroom built on the seventh floor of the New York Stock Exchange near her favorite place for lunch. She declared that if it were not in place by the end of the year, she would have a portable unit delivered instead. The bathroom was installed. The women no longer had to go to a different floor to use the facilities.

In 1967 Kathrine Switzer became the first woman to officially enter and run the Boston Marathon. At that time women were not allowed to enter marathons. Women were thought to be too fragile. After Switzer started running, a race official tried to pull her off the course. Then surrounded by her coach, partner, and other men who ran with her as a human shield and support, she finished the race in about four hours. It took four years to change the entrance rules to allow women to run marathons.²²

In 1972 Juanita Kreps became the first woman Director of the New York Stock Exchange. President Carter appointed her to Secretary of Commerce in 1977.²³

²³ Enid Nemy, “Muriel Seibert, a Determined Trailblazer for Women on Wall Street, Dies at 84,” posted August 25, 2013, accessed October 24, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/26/business/muriel-siebert-first-woman-to-own-a-seat-on-wall-st-dies-at-80.html?_r=0.

²² Kathrine Switzer, “The Real Story of Kathrine Switzer’s 1967 Boston Marathon,” accessed October 29, 2013, <http://kathrineswitzer.com/about-kathrine/1967-boston-marathon-the-real-story/>.

²³ Read and Witleib, 240.

The year 1972 was a watershed year in many regards. It was the year that the Woman's Name Rights was established allowing women to do business without requiring them to use their married name. It was also the year that Congress passed Title IX of the Higher Education Act. This allowed women "equal access to higher education and professional schools," but it has become synonymous with equality in athletics. "In the mid 70's, one in twenty-seven high school girls played sports; today that number is one in three."²⁴

Also, in 1972, Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment. However, "When the deadline came for state ratification came in 1982, it fell three states short of the thirty-eight needed. Although 75% of the women lawmakers in those three states supported the ERA, only 46% of the men did."²⁵

Until 1974, no woman could get a credit card in her own name. Women were not able to apply for credit without their husband's signature. In 1974 the Equal Opportunity Credit Act was passed, allowing women to get a credit card in their own names.²⁶ This did not mean women's applications were approved, however. That year Kathryn Kirschbaum was the mayor of Davenport, Iowa. She was turned down for a credit card because her husband did not sign the application. "The argument at the time was that a single man making \$800 a year was better able to repay a loan than a married woman

²⁴ Ching and Ching, 89.

²⁵ Ching and Ching, 90.

²⁶ Elyse Moody, "When Women Couldn't Get Credit Cards: Ten Mind-Blowing Money Milestones," accessed October 24, 2013, <http://www.learnvest.com/2013/06/equal-pay-act-financial-milestones-for-women/>.

with the same pay, so it was okay to discriminate based on marital status.”²⁷ Eventually, Mayor Kirschbaum appealed to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission and won her case.

In 1975 Ella Grasso became the first woman elected governor in the state of Connecticut.²⁸ She served from 1975-1980. There have been thirty-six female governors in American history. Currently five women are serving as governors, down from a high of eight a few years ago.²⁹

In 1978 the Revenue Act was created, which allowed women to use 401ks for retirement planning. In that same year 50% of women over sixteen years old were in the American workforce. By 1980, 50% of college graduates were women. And by 1984, more women than men were earning bachelors and masters degrees.³⁰

The first women’s restroom was added to the U.S. Senate in 1986. It had two stalls. Twenty-eight years later, it was expanded.³¹ The first women’s bathroom near the Senate floor was added in 1993. A women’s bathroom was added in the U.S. Capitol for the women who serve in the House in 2011.³² There are currently twenty female Senators (20%) and seventy-eight women (17.9%) serving in the House of Representatives.

²⁷ Gail Collins, “Where Credit is Due,” *New York Times*, August 23, 2013, accessed September 3, 2013.

²⁸ Karl Kurtz, “How Many Women Governors 2013?” accessed October 25, 2013, http://ncsl.typepad.com/the_thicket/2013/01/how-many-women-governors-2013-v4.html.

²⁹ Kurtz, (accessed October 25, 2013).

³⁰ Sheryl Sandberg, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 5.

³¹ Anneta Konstantinides, “Women Leaders Look Beyond the ‘Glass Ceiling,’ ” accessed October 23, 2013, <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2013/09/women-leaders-look-beyond-the-glass-ceiling/>.

Significant strides were made for women in leadership in the 1980's. In 1981 Sandra Day O'Connor became the first woman Justice of the Supreme Court.³³ In 1984 Geraldine Ferraro (D) became the first woman to run for Vice President on a major party ticket. In 1985 Penny Harrington became the first female Chief of Police of a major U.S. city (Portland, OR). Also in 1985 Wilma Mankiller became the Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, where she served until 1995.³⁴ Each of these women was an important first in her field.

The 1990s were another decade of impressive first accomplishments by women. In 1990 Dr. Antonia Novello became the first woman and Hispanic to become the U.S. Surgeon General. In 1993 Janet Reno was appointed the first female U.S. Attorney General. In 1997 Madeleine Albright became the first female Secretary of State. In 1998 Kathleen McGrath became the first woman to command a U.S. Navy warship.³⁵

The 21st century brought more opportunities to women of minority groups. In 2001 Ruth Simmons became the first African-American college president of an Ivy League school when she accepted the position at Brown University. In 2005 Condoleezza Rice became the first African-American woman Secretary of State. Also in 2005 Cristeta Comerford became the first woman to be the White House Executive Chef. She is Filipino-American.

³² Nancy McKeon, "Women in the House Get a Restroom." accessed October 23, 2013, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2011-07-28/lifestyle/35236659_1_capitol-police-officer-senate-floor-restroom.

³³ Read and Witleib, 323.

³⁴ Elizabeth Cody Kimmel, *Ladies First: 40 Daring American Women Who Were Second to None* (Washington D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2006), 17.

³⁵ Kimmel, 120-140.

Despite Title IX, the glass ceiling is still in place for women in higher education. In 2007 Drew Gilpin Faust became the first female president of Harvard. In a 2005-2006 study, it was found that 50% of lecturers and instructors at the college level are women, however only 36% of assistant professors and full professors are women at colleges. Across all ranks and institutions nationwide, the average salary for women is 81% of what men earn. At community colleges, women have earned their place, making up 47% of tenured fulltime faculty. At bachelors and masters granting schools, however, women comprise only 33% of tenured fulltime faculty, and only 25% at Ph.D. granting institutions. Nationwide, women make up 24% of the full professors, while men are 76%. At Ph.D. granting universities, women represent 19% of the full professors, and men comprise 81%. Finally, across all faculties nationally, women make up 28-29%.³⁶ In education, women's voices are not being heard as much as men's.

In government, doors continued to open for a few women in leadership. In 2002, Nancy Pelosi was a groundbreaker, supported by her father who was a U.S. Congressman and later the mayor of Baltimore. She was selected to be the Democratic Leader of the House of Representatives, making her the first woman in history to be so chosen. Four years later, she again broke new ground for women in U.S. politics. After the Democrats won majorities in both the House and the Senate in the 2006 midterm elections, Pelosi was chosen to become the first woman to take the post of Speaker of the House.³⁷

³⁶ Shilpa Banerji, "AAUP: Women Professors Lag In Tenure, Salary," accessed October 24, 2013, <http://diverseeducation.com/article/6571/#>.

³⁷ Nancy Pelosi, *Know Your Power: A Message to America's Daughters* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2008), 1-10.

Hillary Clinton's career is long and full of distinctions. Her position as First Lady was certainly a gift of which she took full advantage. She advanced the cause of women's rights during her time as First Lady of Arkansas and First Lady while President Clinton was in office. But Clinton accomplished the most impressive achievements on her own. In 2000, she became the first First Lady to be elected to the Senate, and the first women elected from New York. In 2006 Clinton won reelection to the Senate and in 2007 she began her own campaign for President. She is the first woman to win a Presidential Primary Contest. In 2008 Clinton worked for the election of President Obama, and he nominated her to be Secretary of State. She is the third woman of sixty-eight people to hold this position. She has family connections, political connections, money, and experience, and these all contribute to an unmatched level of achievement.

In 2007 President Obama passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in response to continuing pay discrimination. Women are still paid today on average seventy-seven cents for every dollar paid to men. African-American women make only sixty-four cents; and Latina women make fifty-five cents.³⁸

Lilly Ledbetter was a supervisor at the Goodyear plant in Georgia. She worked there for twenty years. She faced sexual harassment, and her boss told her he did not believe women should work there. She did not know she was being discriminated against in her wages until someone mailed her an anonymous note with the wages of three male colleagues written on it. She went to trial and was awarded \$3.3 million in back pay and damages. The Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit reversed the jury verdict, holding that her case was filed too late. The Supreme Court upheld the Eleventh Circuit decision

³⁸ Sandberg, 6.

and ruled that employees cannot challenge ongoing pay discrimination if the employer's original discriminatory pay decision occurred more than 180 days earlier.³⁹

The Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was the first substantive piece of legislation signed by the President. The Act restores longstanding law and helps to ensure that individuals subjected to unlawful pay discrimination are able to effectively assert their rights under the federal anti-discrimination laws. Under the Act, each discriminatory paycheck (rather than simply the original decision to discriminate) resets the 180-day limit to file a claim.

In 2009, President Obama announced his nomination of Sonia Sotomayor for Supreme Court Justice. The U.S. Senate confirmed the nomination in August of 2009 by a vote of 68 to 31. Sotomayor became the first Latina Supreme Court Justice in U.S. history.⁴⁰ Sotomayor did not come from a politically connected family. She came from a supportive one. She attended both Harvard and Yale and became a trusted voice for justice.

Despite some significant advances, women are underrepresented in government leadership. Of 195 independent countries around the world, women run only seventeen.⁴¹ Women comprise only 20% of the Senate (20/100) and 18% of the House (78/435), but they are so rare that they are not always recognized. Prior to her first voting session, a doorman reprimanded Sen. Kelly Ayotte (NH) for using the wrong desk. "The desks," he

³⁹ National Women's Law Center, "Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act," [www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org/resource/lilly-ledbetter-fair-pay-act-0), accessed January 21, 2014, <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/lilly-ledbetter-fair-pay-act-0>.

⁴⁰ Antonia Felix, *Sonia Sotomayor: The True American Dream* (New York, NY: Berkley Books, 2010), 236.

⁴¹ Sandberg, 5.

sternly told her, “were for senators only.”⁴² Women are still a minority in the Senate.

Throughout American history there have been only forty-four female Senators.

Women are also underrepresented in business leadership. Only twelve women are Fortune 500 CEO’s, and only 14% of executive positions are held by women.⁴³ There are now twenty female CEOs running America’s largest companies. That number (4%) is actually a record and a recently set one. More than half (eleven) landed the top job between 2011 and 2012. IBM appointed a woman, Ginni Rometty, to lead the company. Wal-Mart appointed Rosalind Brewer as its first woman and first African-American to head a subsidiary company, Sam’s Club. Other new CEO’s include Marissa Mayer at yahoo!, HP’s Meg Whitman, Sheri McCoy at Avon and Time Inc.’s Laura Lang.⁴⁴

Women are underrepresented as Nobel Prize winners as well. Since 1905, 876 people and organizations have been awarded these coveted prizes. Women have received only forty-five of them (Marie Curie won twice). Fifteen women have won Nobel Peace Prizes: thirteen have won in literature, ten in medicine, four in chemistry, and two in physics. In all, women have been awarded 5% of the prizes over 108 years.⁴⁵

Although women earned the right to vote almost one hundred years ago, there is a long way to go before women will be heard as equals in leadership roles. Every woman has been granted the right to vote; but women who aim to lead in predominantly male

⁴² Jennifer Steinhauer, “Once Few, Women Hold More Power in Senate,” accessed October 25, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/22/us/politics/women-make-new-gains-in-the-senate.html?pagewanted=1&_r=0.

⁴³ Sandberg, 5.

⁴⁴ Caroline Howard, “The New Class Of Female CEOs,” accessed October 29, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/carolinehoward/2012/08/22/introducing-the-new-class-of-female-ceos/>.

⁴⁵ “Nobel Prize Awarded Women,” accessed October 23, 2013, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/lists/women.html.

dominated areas still face substantial challenges, discrimination and sexism. The women who do lead in these areas are still the exception to the rule. Frequently they use family connections, political connections, financial power, or their husbands' names to help them achieve their high status.

Having examined women's history over the last hundred years, it does not surprise me that women have a hard time becoming successful senior pastors of large churches. The resistance to women in leadership is still part of our country's DNA. It is that resistance that needs to be challenged by women who are Associate Pastors who seek to make their call from God more than a disposable job.

Since the pulpit, historically, has been a man's domain, it still stands that women have a hard time making it theirs. Women in churches are generally seen as more pastoral and nurturing, whereas men are seen as prophetic preachers. Women who have broken through the stained glass ceiling have often done so with the same kind of assistance as women in government, business or academia have had: family, financial or marital power. For women without these benefits, the career path in ministry is still likely to be small parishes, multi-charge parishes, associate pastorates, youth work, Sunday school superintendent, meal planning, and liturgy. For those with connections, the path is more open to break through the stained glass ceiling to larger parishes, conference ministry, national denominational boards, and international ministries.

Yet there are occasional cracks in the ceiling. For example, "From the early 1990s through 1999 just 5% of the senior pastors of Protestant churches were female. Since that time the proportion has slowly but steadily risen, doubling to 10% in 2009." Women are also better educated. "Women in the pulpit are generally more highly educated than are

their male counterparts. Currently, more than three-quarters of female pastors (77%) have a seminary degree. Among male pastors less than two-thirds (63%) can make that same claim.⁴⁶ “More lead women pastors than lead male pastors have been awarded doctoral degrees.” In one recent study, it was found that, “The average number of professing members in lead women pastors’ churches was 1,827, compared with 1,736 in lead male pastors’ churches. The average worship attendance of churches that lead women serve is higher than that of churches the male respondents in this study serve.”⁴⁷ Women may have to work harder and be better to prove themselves, but it is no longer illegal or unprecedented for women to work their way to a valuable leadership position. When the resistance is challenged, it does occasionally give way. The more it is challenged, the more opportunities appear.

The first woman to break through the stained glass ceiling and be ordained in a mainline Protestant denomination was Antoinette Brown in 1853. She served less than a year before the pressures of pastoral ministry weighed so heavily on her that she suffered a breakdown in physical and mental health. She confessed to having “the blues” or “brain fever” which reflected her isolation, exhaustion, both spiritual growth and doubts, and the unexpected rigors of the pastorate.⁴⁸ Thirty years later in 1889, only four more women had been ordained. In 1920, in the same tradition of Congregationalism, a study revealed that out of 5695 active clergy, 67 (12%) were women. In 2003, there were 2832 ordained

⁴⁶ The Barna Group, “Number of Female Senior Pastors in Protestant Churches Doubles in Past Decade.” accessed January 21, 2014, https://www.barna.org/barna-update/leadership/304-number-of-female-senior-pastors-in-protestant-churches-doubles-in-past-decade#.Ut64j_16gb2.

⁴⁷ Susan Willhauck, “A Graceful Struggle: The Lead Women Pastors Project.” accessed January 21, 2014, <http://www.gbh.org/networking/graceful-struggle-lead-women-pastors-project>.

⁴⁸ Elizabeth Cazden, *Antoinette Brown Blackwell: A Biography* (Old Westbury, NY; The Feminist Press, 1983), 86, 90.

women out of the United Church of Christ's roster of 10,321 active clergy (27%).⁴⁹ In a nationwide survey of clergy in 1990, 11% were women. However, in the black church only about 3% were women.⁵⁰ In a 2010 National Congregations Study, it was found that "women lead about 8% of congregations, and only about 5% of American churchgoers attend a congregation led by a woman."⁵¹ Although there are holes in the ceiling, they grow slowly and are still relatively small.

As stated above, the United Church of Christ (UCC) is ahead of the curve. The UCC is known nationally as a more progressive denomination, despite each church's having autonomy. There is some speculation that autonomous congregations can be the slowest to receive women in the pulpit, because they can say, "We don't want a woman;" and no Associate Conference Minister can force them to deal with one.⁵² But the UCC still has a higher percentage of women clergy than most other denominations. According to a 1994 study, the only denomination with a higher percentage of women clergy is the Unitarian-Universalist Association with 30%.⁵³

The United Methodist church began ordaining women in 1956. Their forebears in the United Brethren ordained women in the 1880s. The ordination of women became

⁴⁹ Barbara Brown Zikmund, "UCC Celebrates an Anniversary: 150 Years of Women Clergy," *UCC.org*, accessed October 23, 2013, <http://www.ucc.org/ucnews/sep03/ucc-celebrates-an.html>.

⁵⁰ Faith Wanbura Ngunjiri and Sharon Gramby-Sobukwe, "Tempered Radicals: Black Women's Leadership in the Church and Community," *Journal of Pan African Studies* vol. 5, no. 2 (April 2012), accessed October 23, 2013, https://www.academia.edu/1558361/Tempered_Radicals_Black_Womens_Leadership_in_the_Church_and_Community.

⁵¹ Christine A. Smith, *Beyond the Stained Glass Ceiling: Equipping and Encouraging Female Pastors* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2013), 91.

⁵² Carl J. and Dorothy Schneider, *In Their Own Right: The History of American Clergywomen* (New York, NY: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 263.

⁵³ Hartford Institute for Religion Research, accessed November 22, 2013, http://hirr.hartsem.edu/research/quick_question3.html.

slightly clouded after their merger with the Evangelical Church, but some women continued to be ordained in the Evangelical United Brethren church (EUB), which merged with the Methodist church in 1968. Today about 27% of United Methodist clergy are women, up from 15.8% in 1995.

The Episcopal Church had no specific law or rule prohibiting the ordination of women; however, it was a tradition that was upheld until July 29, 1974. On that day eleven women were ordained “irregularly.” The House of Bishops called an emergency meeting to denounce the ordinations, since the women did not have the required recommendation from the standing committee. However, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church approved the ordinations to the priesthood and episcopate. According to a 2012 study, 34% of priests serving the Episcopal Church are women.⁵⁴

The Southern Baptist church does not allow women to hold positions of leadership over men, and therefore women are not able to be ordained to the ministry. A Baptist congregation can hire anyone they choose, but they run the risk of being “disfellowshipped” or expelled from the denomination if they call a woman. Of the approximately 44,000 congregations in the US, women lead less than 100, or 4%.⁵⁵ Most right-wing evangelicals also believe that men are the head of house and church and refuse to allow women to be pastors.

But there have been dissenters. Shirley Taylor founded Baptist Women for Equality. Former Southern Baptists who rejected gender discrimination formed The New

⁵⁴ Church Pension Group Office of Research, “The State of the Clergy 2012: A Report for The Episcopal Church,” accessed November 22, 2013, <https://www.cpg.org/linkservid/DC3EE5A8-F95C-2278-107475F87BFDB2AA/showMeta/0/>.

⁵⁵ Barbara Bradley Hagerty, “Baptist Leaders Face Challenge on Women’s Roles.” *National Public Radio*, npr.org, accessed October 23, 2013, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=106932178>.

Baptist Covenant, in which gender equality and women pastors are accepted and affirmed.⁵⁶ Both Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton left the Southern Baptist tradition because they found it too discriminatory.

In the Roman Catholic Church, women are not ordained and cannot serve as deacons, priests or bishops. The Vatican insists that a priest is supposed to be in the image of Christ, and women cannot be that. Even Pope Francis has closed the door on women priests.⁵⁷ However, 83% of Catholic parish work is done by lay women.⁵⁸ Recently some women have made strides in leadership in the Catholic Church in administrative fields. Women have become Chancellor, Pastoral Administrator, and Senior Fellow for the first time. In a more grassroots movement, “Roman Catholic Women Priests,” women are reclaiming their “rightful God-given place ministering to Catholics as inclusive and welcoming priests.”⁵⁹ They have ordained over 60 women as deacons, priests and bishops.

Sally Priesand was the first female rabbi ordained in the Reform Movement of Judaism in 1972. The Reconstructionist Movement ordained a woman in 1974 and the Conservative Movement in 1985. But Orthodox Jews have not yet officially ordained a woman. When Eveline Goodman-Thau felt called to be a rabbi, she found a rabbi in

⁵⁶ Fiedler, xxii.

⁵⁷ A. James Rudin, “The Persistent Stained-Glass Ceiling,” accessed October 23, 2013, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-08-22/national/41435526_1_stained-glass-ceiling-male-clergy-sally-priesand.

⁵⁸ Renee M. LaReau, “Church Ladies: Women in Leadership,” accessed October 23, 2013, <http://www.uscatholic.org/church/2010/11/church-ladies-women-leadership>.

⁵⁹ Roman Catholic Womenpriests-USA, Inc., accessed November 22, 2013, <http://romancatholicwomenpriests.org>.

Israel to ordain her.⁶⁰ The Orthodox tradition does not even have a word for ordained female rabbis and so Avi Weiss, a respected Orthodox Rabbi in New York City, created one: “maharat.”⁶¹ It is an acronym of four Hebrew words that translate to mean, “female leaders in Jewish religious law, spiritual matters, and Torah.” The Washington Post reported in 2013, “Ruth Balinsky Friedman is the first woman hired by a US synagogue to be a ‘maharat,’ or female spiritual leader.”⁶² The title was new, even though women have been serving in the synagogue and community for thousands of years informally. The title was also controversial with some claiming it suggests secondary status. Another title was offered: “Rabba,” which is the feminized version of Rabbi. As early as 2009, Weiss ordained Sara Hurwitz as Maharat, but the following year changed her title to Rabba, indicating she functioned in as full a capacity as her male counterparts. However, the conservatives hit back hard; and Weiss compromised by returning to the title Maharat.⁶³ There is no law prohibiting the ordination of women, but equality is slow to come.

In Islam, women are sometimes permitted to be Qur’anic scholars and teachers; but they are generally not allowed to become “imams” or “leaders.” They are not supposed to lead mixed-gender prayer services. In mixed-gender services, the women sit behind the men (some say to protect them from scrutiny during prayers), or in separate

⁶⁰ Fiedler, xxii.

⁶¹ Rudin, accessed October 23, 2013.

⁶² Michelle Boorstein, “In a first, a female spiritual adviser joins an Orthodox synagogue in D.C.,” accessed November 10, 2013, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-07-04/local/40369713_1_orthodox-women-rabbis-judaism.

⁶³ Leora Tanenbaum, “The Challenge of Women Leadership in Orthodox Jewish Communities,” accessed November 10, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/leora-tanenbaum/female-rabbis-prohibited-b_827082.html.

rooms of the mosque. Many women have had similar experiences of being excluded from the mosque, having listened to preachers demean women or having endured belittling marriage counseling from religious leaders; and so there is some interest in raising women into leadership roles.

There are times when women's leadership is appropriate. When women pray by themselves, a woman imam (most often suggested is the wife of the imam) leads the other women. This is the preferred method for leading women's prayer services. In addition, a few scholars have conceded that if there is no other qualified person to lead certain prayers, a woman may lead.⁶⁴ Those who wish to expand women's leadership roles cite the wives of the Prophet Muhammad who led women in congregational prayer as examples for both women's prayer services and mixed-gender prayer services.

Muslim women have different opportunities around the world. In South Africa, Muslim women won gender equality in the 1980s with the end of apartheid. Women began leading in major US cities around 2005. Dr. Amina Wadud held the first mixed-gender prayer service in New York that year. In West Virginia, Asra Nomani, a Muslim feminist, moved in front of the men to pray one day in 2005. In 2006, Morocco and Turkey both appointed women imams.⁶⁵ Surprising progress is being made.

In Buddhism and Hinduism, the structure is not as rigid, but women still wrestle for title and responsibility in areas of spiritual leadership. In Thailand, Buddhist women strive for ordination as "monks." In the Baha'i faith, women cannot be elected to

⁶⁴ Ingrid Mattson, "Can a Woman be an Imam? Debating Form and Function in Muslim Women's Leadership," accessed November 11, 2013, <http://www.onbeing.org/program/newvoiceislam/feature/can-woman-be-imam-debating-form-and-function-muslim-womens>.

⁶⁵ Natana J. DeLong-Bas, "Women, Islam, and the Twenty-first Century," accessed November 11, 2013, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/focus/essay1107_women.html.

leadership. Even though there are strides made in some faiths, other areas remain immutably denied to women.

Sikhism is a rare religion where men and women are encouraged and supported equally, at least in principle. Women founded two major religions: Mary Baker Eddy founded Christian Science, and Ellen White started Seventh Day Adventists. These three by no means constitute equal representation in religious leadership or make up for women being discouraged from leading in the majority of the world's religions.

There have been a few women who have broken ground in some of the most prestigious positions in the church. Bishop Vashti McKenzie became the first women bishop of the African-Methodist Episcopal church in 2000. The Rev. Susan Andrews became the first woman national moderator of the Presbyterian Church in 2003. The Rev. Sharon Watkins became the First Woman General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 2005 and the first woman to preach at a presidential inauguration Prayer Service in 2009. Katharine Jefferts Schoni became the first female Episcopal Bishop in 2006.

In other faiths, women have also broken through the stained glass ceiling to hold important positions of leadership. Ingrid Mattson became the first woman president of Islamic Society of North America in 2006. Swami Krishna Priya Bognovati became the first woman Hindu Acharya ("respected teacher") in the U.S. in 2003. Ishani Chowdhury became the first Director of Public Policy for the Hindu American Foundation in 2006. All of these accomplishments are worthy of awe and appreciation and each woman is inspiring.

Most women in ministry still feel the limitations and constraints the stained-glass ceiling presents. It is the experience of “everywoman” in the pulpit that needs support in order to advance as a woman in a male dominated field. The majority of the world still harbors resistance against women in religious leadership. It is shown in unusual, sometimes cruel ways.

One woman pastor who has been serving for nineteen years as the Senior Pastor of a church she started, shared this experience:

During a visit to one particular church, I received a note from the usher as I was sitting at the front with the pastor of this congregation, waiting for the moment when I would go into the pulpit to preach. I opened the note, and this is what it said: ‘you will go to hell coz your knees are showing.’ I folded the note, and handed it over to the pastor. He read it, folded it, and put it in his pocket. We did not talk about it. When the usher realized what the note said, she was flabbergasted - it had been handed to her to bring to me.⁶⁶

This incident reflects the resistance women sometimes face particularly in regards to ministry from the pulpit. It stems from a number of socio-cultural factors steeped in traditionalism and sexism.

Sometimes the resistance comes from men, but it also comes from women. Here is an example of a woman who upheld traditional and sexist views on women in ministry.

An African-American minister in the Church of God told us of being asked to recommend a candidate for a church in which she had often preached. ‘When I mentioned a friend,’ our informant said, ‘one of the ladies burst out, ‘But she’s a woman! I don’t think that a woman would make a pastor!’ She was embarrassed, so she looked at me and said, ‘But I don’t mean no harm.’⁶⁷

This kind of comment perpetuates stereotypes that women strive to break. It reflects the resistance to having women in the pulpit at all and can keep a woman from

⁶⁶ Ngunjiri and Gramby-Sobukwe, 97.

⁶⁷ Schneider, 264.

getting a call to serve. Often, people who oppose women's leadership never say why they are against it. But when the reasons finally come out, they usually include one or more of the following.

- A woman is not strong enough to lead.
- It is not God's will for a woman to become a pastor.
- A woman should be at home with her husband and children.
- A woman can't handle oversight of a church.
- Men will not follow women.⁶⁸

Here is an example of two men who expressed resistance to women's leadership, for several of the above reasons.

My worst experience, a Presbyterian minister told us, was in campus ministry, where a leader of the main student group walked into my office the first week and said, 'I don't believe you are called to ministry. I don't think what you're doing is Biblical, and therefore I am resigning my position and I'm going to boycott anything that you or this campus ministry is involved in from now on and I'm going to spread the word.' And then walked out of the office.⁶⁹

Even young people can harbor resistance to women's leadership. "A minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church writes of a young man who "...loudly declared as he turned to leave [when he saw her in the pulpit], 'A woman can't tell me nothing.'"⁷⁰

It is possible to eliminate a candidate based on gender because of the separation of church and state and in congregations with autonomy. One congregation in North Dakota during the late 19th century summed it up like this, "If it had come to pass when a woman

⁶⁸ Smith, 36.

⁶⁹ Schneider, 264.

⁷⁰ Schneider, 264.

must fill the pulpit they had better shut up altogether before they were disgraced.” One farmer added, “I’d ruther have a man that wa’nt so good.”⁷¹

Every time a congregation calls another man instead of a woman, the traditionalism is strengthened and congregational expectations solidify. Pastor Marilyn Parker-Jeffries, who started New Creation Baptist Church in Lorain, Ohio, put it like this:

The leading pastorate role has traditionally been seen as a male role. We’ve allowed that view to morph into behaviors and mindsets that make it difficult for us to consider looking beyond our tradition. We’ve allowed ourselves to become entrenched in certain ways of thinking without understanding why that’s the way it is and always has been.⁷²

So tradition is one real source of resistance. Another ideology that spawns resistance to women in ministry is ageism. Women are generally eight to ten years older than their male counterparts. Most say this is because women were not exposed to female ministers or leaders as children, so their call took longer to blossom and be fulfilled than men who had mentors and role models from the beginning. Also, women first came into ministry as a second career, after the family was raised. So women would be in their first call when men their same age were in their third.

One woman, Rev. Julia Moses, who served as Associate Minister at Covenant Baptist Church in Wickliffe, Ohio, felt called to go to seminary in her 60s. She recalls the conversation when she asked her senior pastor about it.

Upon first revealing my desire to be a senior pastor, it was met with unanticipated negativity. The question was asked, ‘Don’t you think you are too old for that?’ I had not considered my age because I have been and continue to be in reasonably good health. I have a lot of stamina and I believe it is what God wants me to do. Also I have witnessed my male counterparts who were my age and older being called and serving as interims or senior pastors. One of my well-respected

⁷¹ Schneider, 264.

⁷² Smith, 42.

mentors said to me, ‘You are in your sixties now. You certainly don’t want to be seventy years old dragging up and down to a pulpit!’⁷³

This comment combines ageism with the traditional view that women should not be in the pulpit. Moses went to seminary anyway but not without thoughtfully considering whether God was really calling her or not.

We are heavily socialized to expect to see a man in the pulpit as the senior pastor. There is a continued need to educate congregations about women clergy, both as a justice issue and to encourage equality or at least equal opportunity in the pulpit. If women are not in the pulpit, congregations never get the chance to change their views and expectations of their preachers, teachers and leaders.

We are also socialized to expect men to be dominant leaders and women to be subservient.⁷⁴ One of the places this is a particularly great challenge is when the associate is a woman. An associate who challenges the status quo or leads her particular program may be seen as a threat to the senior pastor. Seniors often support the female associate when they do not expect very much from them. But when the associate becomes accomplished and achieves her goals and beyond, the male senior withdraws the support.

When women are called to an associate position, it is sometimes envisioned as a subservient role that does not help the woman pastor learn the whole trade. Not only is she called to be subservient, but also the position is geared to keep her subservient. If she challenges the job description or the modus operandi, she is not rewarded but put back in her place. When a woman pastor leaves this kind of position, it is with the intention of finding a better work environment. But since she has little experience and no more skills

⁷³ Smith, 47.

⁷⁴ Ngunjiri and Gramby-Sobukwe, 104.

than she had coming out of seminary, her options are limited. The result is the acceptance of a call to a struggling, remote, difficult, or dysfunctional church. It becomes a demanding situation, where she must learn new skills as she goes. But if the church responds to her leadership, she has won herself a place to serve without some of the previously experienced limitations.⁷⁵

The position of a woman in ministry can be taxing. In 1993 one woman said, "I am forthright in saying I cannot afford to work more than half time for the church." She does not specify whether she cannot afford it because of the pay or the toll it takes on her. Another said, "I am actively seeking a new career direction – not for lack of continued call, but for lack of opportunities with decent conditions and pay." Still another pointed directly to the continued resistance as a reason to leave the profession, "I sense very strongly a longing and need to be moving into something else with perhaps less resistance and more valuing of my gifts."⁷⁶ And another reflected on the women with whom she went to seminary, saying,

I went into the ministry in the first place because I believed the church could effect social change. Now I realize that I am not going to be in a position to do the things I've always felt called to do. I am not going to be called to an urban church as a social justice person, working with housing projects, food pantries, homeless shelters, getting people involved in Habitat for Humanity, doing educational programs about hunger and poverty. I'm not going to be called to be head of staff. I see no future. The four seminary classmates I've kept in touch with, very gifted women, have always been underemployed. I just had a call from one of my presbytery friends, saying she can't stand it any more and wanting to know how I feel about my decision to leave. This seems to happen to a lot of women about the seven to ten year mark. The church ends up losing many good people. They're so gifted. They have so much to offer. And the church just can't make room for them. It's so sad to me.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Ngunjiri and Gramby-Sobukwe, 100.

⁷⁶ Schneider, 262.

The feeling of futility is not rare among women clergy and leaders. In some instances, the limitations are real and unchangeable. For example, a 2002 study by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) restated a static truth about women's experience in the Catholic church: "As long as jurisdiction (the power to govern) is tied to ordination, a very limited number of roles with authority will be open to women."⁷⁸ Administrative roles may be as far as women can go in that faith right now.

For the others who face different limitations, specific strategies can be employed to cope with situations. Some women are allowed to preach but not from the pulpit. What should they do? There are several options. Many now ask whether they are being asked to speak from the floor or the pulpit before deciding whether or not to accept an invitation. Women can choose to preach from the floor and use it as an educational opportunity to teach the congregation about excellent women preachers. This is called "rocking the boat from within while being careful not to fall out of the boat" by some and "quiet resistance" by others.⁷⁹ Still others criticize this method and feel it is submitting to male hierarchy and maintaining tradition.

The other option is that women can refuse to preach and look for other places where they would be welcome in the pulpit. Jesus said if people do not want to listen to you, shake the dust from your sandals and move to another town. In some cases this means women start their own churches. Members of these congregations never argue

⁷⁷ Schneider, 262.

⁷⁸ LaReau, accessed October 23, 2013.

⁷⁹ Ngunjiri and Gramby-Sobukwe, 98.

about women preaching, teaching, and leading. Leaving a church that is not supportive of a woman's call can be painful but the beginning of another opportunity as well.

This study has revealed to me, more clearly than ever, the challenges women in ministry face. There is still significant resistance against ordaining women, preaching from the pulpit, being senior pastor, being senior pastor of a church over 1000 members, and serving in higher church governing bodies. The reasons include denominational beliefs, interpretation of scripture, tradition, sexism, ageism, a gender bias, a double standard, socio-economic factors, and disproportionate family responsibilities. One of the main stumbling blocks women face is congregations' expectation of what a pastor should be. The vast majority of American mainline congregants still sees and hears a man in the pulpit every Sunday. Women are still the exception.

Even when women are educated, ordained, and called, they still face challenges. One issue is the expectation that she will be part of the boys' club and act like a man, speak like a man, and preach like a man. Another is that she will be nice and value likeability above success. Still another is that she will be subservient to other male leadership, especially if she is an associate or assistant pastor. None of those challenges has anything to do with whether or not the woman pastor is faithful to the call, qualified, skilled, or able to do the job. They all have to do with how people relate to one another.

These challenges are so broad that success seems unlikely. It is so easy to fail because, while a pastor is trying to do her job (preach, teach, administer sacraments), she is being judged on how well she gets along with others based on a traditional, sexist, old-fashioned model of how men and women should relate. Sheryl Sandberg, CEO of Facebook, notes that for men, likeability and success are directly related, but for women

they are “negatively correlated” or opposing factors.⁸⁰ This mean that the more successful a woman is, the less likeable she appears. And the opposite it true too: the less successful, or I would even add ambitious, a woman is, the more likeable she seems to her peers and colleagues. For an associate pastor who is young and female, the chances of getting stuck in a low level position is great. Advancing to a higher level might mean sacrificing her most significant friendships and relationships.

Women often feel trapped or stuck in either low level or subservient positions that do not make use of their gifts and skills. This results in job dissatisfaction and frequent (largely lateral) moves to other positions. This activity leads to the destabilization of the family and children in particular and the increased distrust a congregation feels for the next associate pastor. The package is reduced, and the next woman who is just as desperate for a call, takes it. It is a downward spiral.

Some women who have attained their goals in leadership actually step away and quit the position they worked for, finding that ambition has too high a price. Participating in corporate leadership, groundbreaking academic work, or political service sometimes requires women to make sacrifices in other areas that leave them feeling unsatisfied. It is a painful irony that the position for which one has worked for years, if not generations, might not yield fulfillment. I believe that this dissatisfaction may be caused by the remaining imbalance between men and women in these traditionally male dominated workplaces. Some women feel like they have to become like a man to survive or be respected in a high level job. Schedules that do not accommodate family needs, a lack of

⁸⁰ Sandberg, 40.

bathroom facilities, rare occurrences of on site day care, and lack of nearby parking for pregnant employees all reflect the fact that in many ways it is still a man's world.

This is the position in which many women in ministry find themselves. They may start out in an associate position and work their way up the ladder to a larger parish, a solo parish, or a more prestigious position. But the cost is high. Churches can be disproportionately demanding of women ministers. Churches can be demanding of the minister's time and energy. Burnout and abuse are common. Women may find that they are more content with the balance of their lives in an associate role, even though that is not how they envisioned themselves when they began.

It is important to come to terms with the challenges, limitations, and expectations surrounding women in leadership. Yes, it is possible, especially with personal or familial connections, ample money, or a strong endorsement. But no, it is not easy, even when all of those bonuses are in line. For every woman who broke through the glass ceiling, there were others who did not make it because of their gender. Most of the women who broke through the glass ceiling got their hands cut in the process. And every time a woman made it, there were people to say she did not deserve it, voting against her no matter what her qualifications. Women are sometimes called to be the senior pastor, Conference Minister, Bishop, or District Superintendent; but there are many more women who are still serving in small parishes, multi-point parishes, and associate positions that are stifling, because they are women.

This survey of the history of women's leadership in the United States reveals the fact that although some women have made it into positions of leadership where their voices are welcomed at the table, the vast majority of women are still struggling to get to

that place. Women are more commonly serving as second in command but feel as though their hands are tied and their voices are not heard. The remaining resistance to women's leadership, no matter how subtle, makes it easy to get brushed aside, ignored, or silenced. Standing against the resistance to women's leadership takes tenacity, skill, and patience. But throughout history women have stood their ground to do something for the first time again and again. And they have succeeded.

Collaboration inherently reduces the resistance to women's contributions. If a church staff can adopt a more collaborative model, women's gifts and skills become welcome at the table, associate pastor positions will become more respected and valued. The increased value would in turn provide more fulfillment and stability for women associate pastors that would benefit the pastors, their families, the church and the congregation.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

Where did the original gender bias come from? Where did humanity get the idea that men should lead the church and women should follow? What do theologians through the ages contribute to the position and standing of women in the church? What kind of relationship did God have in mind for men and women who serve together? How do our beliefs about the *Imago Dei*, and what it means to be “made in the image of God” affect how we receive women in church leadership? Theology determines our interpretation of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, and when this construct is applied to clergywomen in America, in particular those serving as associate pastors, patterns of belief appear. If we believed women were created completely in the image of God, and therefore are completely equally with men, clergywomen would be valued more highly by the congregation and other staff members and fulfillment and stability would both increase for the associate pastor, her family, and the church.

The theological framework to be used as a foundation for this project is feminist theology, which is a movement of contemporary thought in Christianity, and other religions, to reconsider religious practices, scriptures, traditions and theologies from a feminist perspective. One focus of feminist theology includes increasing respect for and value of every woman. Another includes increasing the responsibilities of women among

clergy and religious authorities. It includes a reinterpretation of God as not necessarily male, the fall from grace as not necessarily Eve's fault, and the possibility that women are created as whole and healthy beings, even though they are different than men.

One of the leading theologians in this field is Rosemary Radford Ruether (b. 1936), a feminist scholar, Catholic theologian, and formerly Professor of Applied Theology at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary. Her work brought feminist theology to the table in its infancy and saw it through to its full development, including a valuable connection to eco-theology. Other mainline feminist theologians include Carol Christ (b. 1944), often called the “founding mother” of feminist theology and President of Smith College from 2002-2013; Judith Plaskow (b. 1947), the first Jewish feminist to identify herself as a theologian, and Professor of Religious Studies at Manhattan College; Mary Daly (1928-2010), feminist philosopher and theologian who taught at Boston College; Elizabeth Johnson (b. 1941), a Catholic Christian feminist theologian and Distinguished Professor of Theology at Fordham University; Mary McClinton Fulkerson, Professor of Theology at Duke Divinity School; Phyllis Trible (b. 1931), a feminist Biblical scholar and Professor at Union Theological Seminary; Sallie McFague (b. 1933), an American feminist Christian theologian; and Joan Chittister (b. 1936), a Benedictine nun, author and speaker. These women did the main work of the opus between 1960-2000.

Feminist theologians have brought new meaning to the interpretation of the imago Dei in the doctrine of God. The imago Dei means the “image of God,” and refers to the belief that all people are created in the image of God. Because of the uniqueness of this relationship, God is able to be present in people, therefore giving humans intrinsic value,

regardless of function.¹ Feminist theologians believe this applies to all people, regardless of sex or gender, and, therefore, no one should be subject to discrimination on the basis of their gender.

However, the *imago Dei* has been the subject of much debate and discussion over the centuries. According to theologian Gerhard von Rad, it means “the pattern on which [human beings are] fashioned is to be sought outside the sphere of the created.”² Others state that “human beings are given such gifts that they can take up the God-given responsibilities specified in the verses (in Genesis 1),” and “The ‘image’ refers to the entire human being, not to some part, such as the reason or the will.” And finally, “The image functions to mirror God to the world, to be god as God would be to the non-human, to be an extension of God’s own dominion.”³

There are two questions, then, to be examined: what is the Image of God? and what does it mean to be made in that image? While women in recent decades have enjoyed the benefits of the unique writings and teachings of cutting-edge feminist theologians, gender bias has been around for centuries in the world and in the church.

As far back as the ancient roots of Greek philosophy, there was a belief that men and women were on two separate poles, a polarization between men and women that correlated to reason and passion, mind and body, and spirit and body. Aristotle (384 B.C.E. – 322 B.C.E.) called it the dualism between form and matter.⁴ He believed males

¹ J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005), 25-29.

² Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (New York, NY: Harper, 1962) 1:145.

³ Terrance E. Fretheim, “Genesis,” in *General and Old Testament Articles: Genesis, Exodus and Leviticus*, vol. 1 *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 345.

gave their form to female matter, and thus males were seen as the norm, and females were secondary.⁵ The implications were felt in theology and women were assigned a submissive and lower place in the church, world, and universe. Women were seen as second-class people to be dominated by males. In many churches today, the same model can be heard echoing in the treatment of clergywomen.

Augustine (354 C.E. – 430 C.E.) carried Aristotle's ideas forward and underscored them. His belief that women, in and of themselves were not made in the image of God stemmed from his interpretation of the creation story, as well as his inheritance of philosophy. The concept to which he adhered hinges on the translation of the word “helpmate.” If this word is translated “partner,” a basis of equality can be assumed. If it is translated “helpmate,” woman is assumed to be more of a servant. For Augustine, women were subordinate and had primacy of sin.⁶ This extraordinarily specific and limited view of women’s purpose on earth does not reflect the *imago Dei*.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), a theologian of the Middle Ages, carried Augustine’s ideas forward. In his major document on Christianity, *Summa Theologica*, he wrote, “Women are subordinate both in nature and in purpose....” He believed women were carnal by nature and “have not sufficient strength of mind to resist concupiscence.”⁷

⁴ Suzanne E. Hatty and James Hatty, *The Disordered Body: Epidemic Disease and Cultural Transformation* (Albany, NY: State of New York Press, 1999), 9.

⁵ Hatty and Hatty, 9.

⁶ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women and Redemption: A Theological History* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 3.

⁷ Joan D. Chittister, *Heart of Flesh: A Feminist Spirituality for Women and Men* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 35.

In the fourteenth century, Julian of Norwich (1342-1416) had a series of visions that led her to a gender inclusive understanding of the nature of God. She wrote, “God all Wisdom is our kindly Mother . . . as truly as God is our Father, so truly is God our mother.”⁸ If men are made in the image of the Father God, then women must be made in the Mother God’s image. Including the female gender in her concept of God opened medieval women’s minds to the idea that they too might be made in the image of God. This idea went against the grain of traditional thought but seemed divinely revealed to Julian. However, whereas women may have received Julian’s visions as truth, the concept of God as feminine or even androgynous did not achieve common acceptance in her day.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) maintained Augustine’s proprietary view of women and their worth. He said, “If a woman dies in childbirth, it matters not, because it was for this that she was created by God.”⁹ It could be said that he found women disposable, even if they are fulfilling God’s purpose for their lives. For the author of the Reformation, whose mission was extending access to the holy from priests to laypeople, from Latin to the vernacular, there was clearly still a gender barrier in place. The *imago Dei* was extended only to men.

Another voice in the Reformation, Agrippa (1486-1535) (Heinrich Cornelius) stood in the opposing camp when it came to women. Agrippa believed that women “were fully equal in God’s original creation and, indeed, that they have a special affinity with

⁸ Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, trans. Edmund Colledge and James Walsh (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1978), 159-161.

⁹ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Woman-church: Theology and Practice of Feminist Liturgical Communities* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1985), 71.

divine Wisdom that gives them spiritual and moral superiority.”¹⁰ And thus was born a shift in theological thinking in the Christian world about women regarding creation, the image of God, sin and the fall. Women were restored to equality with men and even enjoyed some superiority over men in Agrippa’s eyes. His theology was not widely received; in fact it would be several hundred years before the idea would gain a prominent audience.

Paul Tillich (1886-1965) developed a concept of God as Being,¹¹ which became the basis for a view of God that was not grounded in a sex/gender or hierarchy. For Tillich, God is not authoritarian; and people are allowed to participate in God through the power of Being. It is understood that when Tillich says “man,” he means humankind. Tillich’s interpretation of the fall does not condemn Eve alone but connects all people to the transition from essence to existence, or youth to adulthood, or innocence to knowledge. And so the doors to a new concept of the imago Dei are opened. God is beyond gender, so we are all included in that image, regardless of sex or gender. The theme of Being applies to men and women equally, and each person is said to include both polarities of reason and emotion. “Man is the image of God in that in which he differs from all other creatures, namely, his rational structure.”¹²

It took centuries for Christian thinkers to reframe the doctrine of the imago Dei to include a feminist theology. Rosemary Radford Ruether (b. 1936) could be said to be the founder of feminist theology. Although she broke ground with other women such as

¹⁰ Rita M. Gross and Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Religious Feminism and the Future of the Planet: A Buddhist-Christian Conversation* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2001), 127.

¹¹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Three Volumes in One* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 163.

¹² Tillich, 259.

Judith Plaskow and Phyllis Trible, her prolific writings put her at the center of radical feminist theology as it became a legitimate arm of theological thought. She re-envisioned the church in her early works and ultimately the planet in her later works devoted to eco-theology.

Ruether's image of God is Liberator. It transcends gender and stereotypes in reaction to the Father God image that she claims was established by patriarchy to further their cause. "Male monotheism has been so taken for granted in Judeo-Christian culture that the peculiarity of imaging God solely through one gender has not been recognized."¹³ Other religions of the time incorporated both a God and Goddess figure that were a team. She explains how imaging God as solely male leads to the unfounded conclusion that human men are God's sons, and thus the hierarchy is established and carried on. Women become second-class and are only connected to God secondarily through a male.

Ruether and other feminists claim God to be gender inclusive and liberationist. God can also be named as female. But it is God the Liberator, in Ruether's work, that is the primary image.

God also is the Liberator who sides with the poor and puts the mighty down from their thrones. This includes women, the oppressed in patriarchal societies, as those with whom God sides. Third world feminist theologies point particularly to poor women, to Black and Third World women, as the oppressed of the oppressed, whom God is empowering to become liberated liberators. In putting the mighty in all these systems of power down from their thrones, God empowers us to seek the peaceful kingdom where all humans and the earth itself are in harmonious partnership.¹⁴

¹³ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1983), 53.

¹⁴ Gross and Ruether, 138.

Ruether examined the Biblical creation stories (Genesis 1 and 2-3), acknowledging their differences, but concluded that the views on women are the same. She noted that women were not a separate order of creation that happened on a different day, like the animals and the plants, but on the same day as man. "Woman is, along with man, the direct and intentional creation of God and the crown of his creation."¹⁵ She names Adam and Eve together as a pair when talking about the image of God and suggests that together they are "a representative of the sovereignty of God over the universe."¹⁶ Ruether references rabbinic tradition and midrash that wrestled with the two sequential stories of the creation of a woman: the first and equal and simultaneous creation and the second built from the rib of Adam. One solution was that these were two different stories of two different women. The first was said to be Adam's first wife, Lilith, who was equal and independent, and left him when he tried to subdue her. The Rabbinic tradition says that Eve is Adam's second wife, subordinate and subservient. However, Ruether states that even the creation of Eve does not require subordination. "Eve is called a 'partner' in language that signified companionship and not subordination."¹⁷ Ruether goes back to the Hebrew words to explain the relationship between the man and the woman.

The man in this creation drama recognizes the woman as his equal, as a 'helper fit for him' (2:18). She is emphatically not his servant. 'Helper' carries no status connotations, while the Hebrew expression translated 'fit for' means basically 'opposite' or 'corresponding to.' The statement simply expresses the man's

¹⁵ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 72.

¹⁶ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Womanguides: Readings Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1985), 42.

¹⁷ Ruether, 62.

recognition (the story is told from his point of view exclusively) that he needs her and that she is essentially like him.¹⁸

From this analysis, Ruether proposes that the imago Dei “represents this authentic humanity united with God.”¹⁹ She transcends sex and gender without adding the dualism so prevalent in Aristotle and Augustine and without the patriarchal hierarchy proposed by many others. Ruether expands her concept of feminist theology to disassemble patriarchal hierarchy in general. “Equality in the image of God means both the equal value of all humans as persons as well as equity in power relations – shared power – rather than the right of men to rule over women, masters over slaves, whites over blacks.”²⁰ Ruether establishes God as Liberator and humans as equals before God.

Phyllis Trible offered a particularly moving re-reading of the creation stories in Genesis that went hand-in-hand with Ruether’s development of feminist theology. Trible begins by transcending the need to reject Bible passages that have traditionally been interpreted in a patriarchal way and calls for a new feminist interpretation. She sees “adham” as an androgynous creation until it is separated into male and female. Trible sees woman not as servant helper but as the culmination of creative power. She sees that woman has the ability to “converse theologically with the snake,”²¹ make her own decisions based on reason, and able to act on them, while the man simply responds as if guided by his stomach.

¹⁸ Ruether, *Religion and Sexism*, 73.

¹⁹ Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, 93.

²⁰ Gross and Ruether, 133.

²¹ Phyllis Trible, “Eve and Adam: Genesis 2-3 Reread” in *WomanSpirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*, Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, ed., (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1979), 79.

In Trible's theology, men and women share equally in the consequences of disobedience.

We misread if we assume that these judgments are mandates. They describe; they do not prescribe. They protest; they do not condone. Of special concern are the words telling the woman that her husband shall rule over her (3:16). This statement is not license for male supremacy, but rather it is condemnation of that very pattern. Subjugation and supremacy are perversions of creation. Through disobedience, woman has become slave. Her initiative and freedom vanish. The man is corrupt also, for he has become master, ruling over the one who is his God-given equal. The subordination of female to male signifies their shared sin.... Whereas in creation man and woman know harmony and equality, in sin they know alienation and discord. Grace makes possible a new beginning.²²

Trible states that the suffering we experience is not a result of our creation as creatures in the image of God, but of our sinfulness. She takes feminist theology even further by stating that this creation story condemns patriarchy and calls for liberation, which she says is in the form of repentance for both men and women.

Mary Daly (1928-2010) was one of the women at the core of the development of feminist liberation theology. She explored society's assumptions about the Image of God and about how the church carries sexism and discrimination forward, enforcing the subordination of women through religious tradition. She wrote, "The image of God as exclusively a father and not a mother, for example, was spawned by the human imagination under the conditions of patriarchal society and sustained as plausible by patriarchy." If God is a man, then men could feel that they represent God "himself." Daly explained how that connection is made, "The widespread concept of the Supreme Being has been a not very subtle mask of the divine father-figure, and it is not too surprising that it has been used to justify oppression, especially that of women, which is said to be 'God's plan.'" If we carry this one step further, we find "Some theologians have argued

²² Trible, 80.

that since Jesus was male, and called only males to become apostles, women should not be ordained.”²³ Herein lies the basis for the Catholic priesthood is reserved for men. One begins to fathom the vastness of the resistance to women in ministry.

Women, in their subservient status, were said to be “equal but different.” Women were conditioned to accept the fact that men were called to be priests and women were not. In fact, “Women were able to accept the fact that a mentally retarded boy was allowed to serve Mass, whereas a woman with a Ph.D. was absolutely excluded from such a function.” Women were excluded from ministry as if it somehow followed the natural order, or God’s plan. The subjugation of women was so subtle that when women married, they were told that they were “subordinate but not inferior,”²⁴ and taught to accept this as a desirable state.

Daly noted that religion is often patriarchal and that “the structures that limit us into sex roles are human products; and human beings support them, even though often we are not conscious of the processes involved.”²⁵ Through these processes of supporting the church and society that created them, women continue to be victimized. Daly said it this way: “The caricature of a human being which is represented by the masculine stereotype depends for its existence upon the acceptance by women of the role assigned to them – the eternal feminine.” Daly suggested through feminist liberation theology that when women reject this role, they are free to become “whole human beings” and “aim at the humanization of women, and therefore of the species.” Finally, Daly’s view was that the

²³ Mary Daly, “The Spiritual Revolution: Women’s Liberation as Theological Re-education,” In *Feminist Theological Ethics: A Reader*, ed. Lois Daly (Louisville, KY; Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 121.

²⁴ Daly, 125-126.

²⁵ Daly, 131.

women's liberation movement responds to the church with "resistance to the oppression carried on by organized religion and offers it the possibility of discovering its own mission of liberation."²⁶ This is the direction needed for establishing the authority of clergywomen in the church.

Douglas John Hall, professor of theology at McGill University in Toronto, Canada, warns against interpreting Biblical passages with a bias toward male dominance. He examines the traditional marital scripture from Mark 10:8, Jesus' statement that "two shall become one."

Feminist theology is justified in protesting against this tendency in historical theology; for not only has this text been used to over-accentuate the participation principle, but – since the resulting merger of being the male partner could be thought the dominant one – it has been tantamount to claiming that marriage, in fact, effect the incorporation of the woman into the man. Combined with such scriptural notions as the creation of the woman from the body of Adam, and the Pauline sentiment that the woman is the man's *imago* as the man is God's, this particular gospel, this particular gospel pronouncement concerning the "one flesh" has all too consistently confirmed sexist moral codes that have assumed the husband's virtual ownership of the wife and thus imposed on women forms of conjugal morality far more stringent and inflexible than those binding men in the marriage covenant.²⁷

Hall continues to propose that being made in the image of God means less in a physical sense but in a relational one. The *imago Dei* is a quality that reflects our relationship with God. He says to think of *imago* as a verb, not as a noun. When we apply the *imago* in this way, we find we are called to love another so that we reflect God's love here on earth. Hall interprets having dominion as meaning to be in service of, whether that pertains to the earth or other human beings.

²⁶ Daly, 131.

²⁷ Douglas John Hall, *Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 154-155.

Elizabeth Johnson is another leading feminist theologian whose writings in recent decades have been groundbreaking. For Johnson the goal of feminist theology is the emergence of women as whole beings with dignity and an authentic connection to God. She acknowledges that the doctrine of humans made in the image of God has ancient roots, but it has been misinterpreted through time, due in part to its roots in Greek culture.

While affirming that human beings generically are created in the image and likeness of God, theology also adopted the hardy form of gender dualism found in Hellenistic thought. It was not a long step from the identification of men with mind, reason, and spirit and concomitantly of women with bodiliness and passion in a metaphorical sense, to a stance that cast actual men alone in the representative role of headship, the primary image of all superior qualities and therefore of God, while women were relegated to secondary status in nature and grace.²⁸

Johnson's views are that not only were women cast into second-class status, but also they were seen as the scapegoat for evil in the world as ideas on the creation and characteristics of men and women became more polarized. "This dichotomization of humanity proceeded to the point where women were even projected to be the symbol of evil, the anti-image of God, the representative of evil tendencies in the sin-prone part of the male self." It became impossible to keep culture and religion separate as human systems infiltrated and affected developing theology and Biblical interpretation. It would seem that culture prevailed. "Undergirded by a dualistic anthropology that sees human nature embodied in two essentially different and unequal ways, this view is the one that predominates throughout most of the history of Christian thought, although always in tension with texts that did grant full participation in the *imago Dei* to women."²⁹

²⁸ Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1992), 70.

²⁹ Johnson, 70.

Johnson draws the line through history to show the need for feminist theology and the dangers that emerge if patriarchal hierarchy is not balanced with the feminine. She also examines the two creation stories from Genesis and reveals a new interpretation.

When the priestly author of Genesis 1 depicts God creating the human race in the divine image and likeness on the sixth day, the text makes clear that the compliment is intended for “male and female” together. All members of the species are equally favored with the theological identity of *imago Dei*, while the story introduces maleness and femaleness to flag the fact that human beings like other creatures are sexual and thus gifted with fertility. Similarly the Yahwist author of Genesis 2 constructs the narrative in such a way that the “earth creature” does not become sexually differentiated until the divine act radically alters ‘*adam*’ to create women and man together as one flesh. Their creation is simultaneous, not sequential.³⁰

Johnson acknowledges the long-standing experience of male dominance in theology and culture and the subsequent subservience of women.

Feminist theological analysis makes clear that exclusive, literal, patriarchal speech about God has a twofold negative effect. It fails both human beings and divine mystery. In stereotyping and then banning female reality as suitable metaphor for God, such speech justifies the dominance of men while denigrating the human dignity of women. Simultaneously this discourse so reduces divine mystery to the single, reified metaphor of the ruling man that the symbol itself loses its religious significance and ability to point to ultimate truth. It becomes, in a word, an idol. These two effects are inseparable for damage to the *imago Dei* in the creature inevitable shortchanges knowledge of the Creator in whose image she is made. Inauthentic ways of treating other human beings go hand-in-glove with falsifications of the idea of God.³¹

Johnson addresses both sides of the *imago Dei* in the above thoughts. Using exclusively male imagery for God limits our concept of God and indirectly results in the denigration of women and the subjection of women to second-class status. Feminist theology can help balance theology and culture’s perception of both God and humanity as whole.

³⁰ Johnson, 70.

³¹ Johnson, 36.

Throughout the 1990s feminist scholars explored the boundaries of feminist theology through the lenses of post-structuralism and deconstructionism. Mary McClintock Fulkerson began her work on feminist theology with the understanding that “theological definitions of the human, of human creation as *imago Dei*, have been misshapen and inadequate.”³² Inclusion of many voices helps build the image of God in which we are made. One danger lies in accepting a single (Euro-American) woman’s experience as the complete picture. She insists that we cannot “...privilege one form of the *imago Dei* over another.”³³ Inclusion is the first step to approaching differences among women, and addressing traditional social formations like patriarchy in the church is the other.

Even as Fulkerson carries the necessity for inclusion forward, she explains how it reaches an impasse. “What has been distinctive about feminist theology is that on the basis of the conviction that women have not been accorded the status of fully human (*imago Dei*) in the Christian tradition, a critical posture emerged that refuses absolute status to any traditional locus of truth.”³⁴ The question becomes, if one woman’s voice is not a valid representation of feminist theology, what is? The tenet of inclusion requires that we keep discovering “outsiders,” and begin to find the “insiders” more foreign than we thought. “Feminist theology’s commitment to the marginalized is complex at this point, not only because it will inevitably be difficult to say who the marginalized might be in any situation, but also because my identification of the marginalized is the act of the

³² Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology* (Minneapolis, MN; Fortress Press, 1994), 13.

³³ Fulkerson, 14.

³⁴ Fulkerson, 370.

privileged that is inevitably bound to fail.” Fulkerson acknowledges these contradictions require us to ask, “Under what conditions of duress can we legitimately testify to a liberating God?”³⁵

Fulkerson pronounces gender hierarchy sinful, and rejects a “fixed imago Dei” in favor of a more inclusive one. She says, “The vision is one of a socially connected ideal for creation, which responds to the pain and suffering of the distant neighbor and asks how our practices are connected to that fate.” She continues, “...faithfulness involves resisting the evil of sexism” which is based on “the practices of the community that knows the valuing of women has transformative effects.”³⁶

As the years went by Fulkerson responded more fully to the idea of destructive hegemony assumed in feminism. Feminist theology came to a crossroads and she addressed this. Whereas until the late 1990s women’s experience had been seen as the source and norm of feminist theology, as different groups were highlighted new constructs emerged. In 1997 she rejected the “false universal” again, and said, “Simply put, the dilemma is how a feminism defined by the desire to alleviate women’s oppression can avoid being hopelessly hegemonic with its focus on a limited subject.”³⁷ So she tries to reconfigure the imago Dei so that hegemony is not assumed.

Fulkerson posits that to say that man is made in the image of God is simply incomplete in a similar way that to say that feminist theology speaks for all women. Whereas Ruether and others had proposed that the purpose of feminist theology was the

³⁵ Fulkerson, 386.

³⁶ Fulkerson, 394.

³⁷ Mary McClintock Fulkerson, “Contesting the Gendered Subject: A Feminist Account of the Imago Dei” in *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms*, edited by Rebecca S. Chopp and Sheila Greeve Davaney, 99-115. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997) 99.

promotion of the full humanity of women as normative for theology, Fulkerson says that too often this has been interpreted as white, upper middle class women.

Fulkerson defines the *imago Dei* as follows: “The *imago Dei* indicates the attributes of human being that make it capable of a relationship to God.” Specifically, she names finitude, or the capacity of having been created, and dependence on God as the two attributes that constitute being made in the image of God. “The feminist charge is that tradition’s compliment to humanity with the *imago Dei* has never been fully paid to women.”³⁸ By defining the image of God as being finite and dependent, feminist theology is closer than ever to being all-inclusive.

Some feminist theologians prefer to spell theology “thealogy” to reflect a perspective different from the patriarchal norm. Some suggest that when speaking of feminism, the term should be corrected to “whitefeminism” to reflect the assumption that feminism refers to Caucasian women’s experience. The advent of “womanism” as a branch of theology created to reflect the African-American woman’s experience is evident that one voice or group of voices does not constitute the entirety of women’s experiences of the divine. And yet the trend is to try to find language to reflect our all-inclusive reflection of God in humanity, and God’s care for every person.

When applied to the American associate clergywoman, a broader concept of God could lead to a more equal concept of men and women of the cloth, which could lead to more respect from the congregation and dignity for the self, which could result in longer tenures with greater job satisfaction.

³⁸ Fulkerson, “Contesting the Gendered Subject,” 107-108.

Similarly, a less patriarchal and more equal understanding of what it means to be created in the image of God can lift the burden of hierarchy from human relationships. If it was understood that men and women were created to be equals, then gender bias would remain only as a cultural construction and not as a religious tenet; and women would have a greater chance to be seen as equals in the workplace, instead of helpers, servants, daughters, and prizes.

Theology can greatly impact expectations and perceptions of men's and women's roles in the church. If a congregation is able to look at the doctrine of God and the imago Dei through the lens of feminist liberation theology, they may be able to step away from a purely hierarchical model of staffing to a more collaborative one. If senior pastors use feminist liberation theology, they could begin to see their female associates as not just gap-fillers but as real and valued colleagues. If female associate pastors drew from feminist liberation theology for their read on the doctrine of God and the imago Dei, they might be empowered as never before. The application of feminist theology and feminist theology of God and the imago Dei to the state and person of the female clergy person could be liberating for both pastors and congregation.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Collaboration really is the first step to getting women at the table where they have not been before. Pastors and churches aiming to be more successful at empowering women associate pastors in collaborative staffing and leadership could benefit from the literature in four contributing areas: women in ministry, women's leadership, associate pastors, and collaborative leadership in and out of the church.

The literature on women in ministry focuses on breaking through the stained-glass ceiling with the intention of either becoming the Senior Pastor of a large congregation or groundbreaking religious leader, or simply being accepted as a woman minister in a resistant setting.¹ The works on women in leadership address the challenges, pitfalls and how-to's of breaking through the glass ceiling, acknowledge the double standard women face in hiring, and establish the aim of leveling the leadership field with men in upper

¹ See: Carol E. Becker, *Leading Women: How Church Women Can Avoid Leadership Traps and Negotiate the Gender Maze* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996); Maureen E. Fiedler, ed. *Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling: Women Religious Leaders in Their Own Voices* (New York, NY: Seabury Books, 2010); Debra E. Harmon and Barbara J Rhodes, *When the Minister is a Woman* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2008); Faith Wambura Ngunjiri and Sharon Gramby Sobukwe, "Tempered Radicals: Black Women's Leadership in the Church and Community," *Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol 5, no. 2, April 2012; HiRho Park and Susan Willhauck, "Cracking the Stained Glass Ceiling," *The Lead Women Pastors Project*, posted 2009, http://www.gbowhb.org/assets/1/7/LWP_Pension_Article.pdf (accessed October 23, 2013); Sally B. Purvis, *The Stained Glass Ceiling: Churches and Their Women Pastors* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995); Christine A. Smith, *Beyond the Stained Glass Ceiling: Equipping and Encouraging Female Pastors* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2013).

management positions.² The literature on Associate Pastors can be applied to clergywomen; however, gender bias is not the focus of these works. These sources include focus on establishing a clear and specific job description, increasing one's own value as a staff member, and making an important contribution to the staff team.³ Finally, the opus on collaborative leadership has grown to include both secular and sacred settings. The church based works offer different models of and skills for collaborative ministry, based on Biblical interpretation and different theologies.⁴ The secular models represent skills and strategies from businesses, orchestras, libraries, politics, and environmental groups.⁵ All of these areas are represented in works that have been written in the last ten years.

² See: Joanna Barsh and Susie Cranston, *How Remarkable Women Lead: The Breakthrough Model for Work and Life* (New York, NY: Crown Business, 2009); Candy Deemer and Nancy Fredericks, *Dancing on the Glass Ceiling: Tap into Your True Strengths, Activate Your Vision, and Get What You Really Want out of Your Career* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Companies, 2003); Sharon Hadary and Laura Henderson, *How Women Lead: 8 Essential Strategies Successful Women Know* (New York, NY: The McGraw-Hill Companies, 2013); Sheryl Sandberg, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013); Linda Tarr-Whelan, *Women Lead the Way: Your Guide to Stepping Up to Leadership and Changing the World* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2009).

³ See: Marty Hawkins, *The Associate Pastor: Second Chair, Not Second Best* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005); Kevin E. Lawson, *How to Thrive in Associate Staff Ministry* (The Alban Institute, 2000); Robert Radcliffe, *Effective Ministry as an Associate Pastor: Making Beautiful Music on a Ministry Team* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1998); Alan Rudnick, *The Work of the Associate Pastor (Work of the Church)* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012).

⁴ See: Sally Nash, Jo Pimlott and Paul Nash, *Skills for Collaborative Ministry* (London, England: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2008); Stephen Pickard, *Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry* (Adelaide, Australia: Ashgate, 2009); James D. and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *The Promise of Partnership: A Model for Collaborative Ministry* (Lincoln, NE: iuniverse.com, a subsidiary of Harper Collins, 2000).

⁵ See: John Wooden and Steve Jamison, *Wooden on Leadership* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2005); Lori Reed and Paul Signorelli, *Workplace Learning and Leadership: A Handbook for Library and Nonprofit Trainers* (Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2011); Harvey Seifert and Peter Economy, *Leadership Ensemble: Lessons in Collaborative Management from the World's Only Conductorless Orchestra* (New York, NY: Times Books, Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2001); Thomas A. Kayser, *Building Team Power: How to Unleash the Collaborative Genius of Teams for Increased Engagement, Productivity, and Results* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2011).

The deficiency overall is simply that no one author has brought these particular challenges and characteristics together in one document. The books on women in ministry skip over encouraging the Associate. The books on women in leadership do not regard collaboration as valuable. The books on Associate Pastors do not deal specifically with the challenges female Associates face. The books on collaborative leadership look more at transforming the whole system than addressing the challenges faced by any one staff member. These foci are all prisms in themselves, but each prism can be tipped in the direction of the others, so their lights join in the center. Of all those topics some yielded more than others. The subjects that contributed the most to my topic are Associate Pastors and collaborative leadership.

Among several books about Associate Pastors, Alan Rudnick's, *The Work of the Associate Pastor*, was one of the best. Rudnick acknowledges that seminaries rarely, if ever, train students to be Associate Pastors. Most clergy come to associate ministry through hardship, job scarcity, or a family commitment to a particular location. He states three factors that are key to an Associate's satisfaction with their job. First, he believes that healthy relationships between Associate and Senior and Associate and congregation contribute significantly to an Associate's success and endurance. Second, Rudnick stresses open communication among those same parties. Third, he names clear expectations and areas of responsibility as making a difference in whether an Associate will stay or go.⁶

Rudnick acknowledges that ambiguity usually surrounds an associate's position. He encourages clergy, congregations and search committees to be clear about what they

⁶ Alan R. Rudnick, *The Work of the Associate Pastor* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012), v-viii.

intend the ministry to entail. That said, there are a number of different possible specialties that can secure a successful associate ministry, so the associate pastor job description will vary from church to church. The direction of ministry should be considered and planned; is this a ministry that will allow a rotation to a new staff person every four to five years, or is this a chance to build a team member into a professional associate who will continue to offer her specialty for years to come?⁷ This clarity around these decisions should be conveyed to the congregation so that they do not assume a default position that the associate is there to pick up whatever pieces the senior drops along the way.

This book is a significant contribution to the field and is helpful to male and female clergy alike. Rudnick cites Biblical support for both men and women to be effective and valuable associate pastors. He addresses contemporary needs including flexibility and accountability and also acknowledges a “functional hierarchy”⁸ that exists to help things go smoothly. Although the author does not point to collaboration in particular, the skills he recommends of open communication, mutual support and flexibility set the stage for effective collaboration to occur.

A similar resource is Robert J. Radcliffe’s book *Effective Ministry as an Associate Pastor: Making Beautiful Music as a Ministry Team*. Radcliffe understands that associate ministry is not usually something to which clergy aspire. In fact if the associate is seminary trained, the associate almost always has the exact same skill set as the senior pastor.⁹ This makes for some potentially uncomfortable overlapping. The author

⁷ Rudnick, 22.

⁸ Rudnick, 15.

⁹ Robert J. Radcliffe, *Effective Ministry as an Associate Pastor: Making Beautiful Music as a Ministry Team* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1998), 70.

approaches the situation with similar advice to Rudnick: Decide the nature of the position and be clear about it to the congregation, staff and applicant.¹⁰ However, he offers ways of determining what kind of minister the associate is and what effect each can have on the congregation.

Radcliffe asserts that associates can be either generalists or specialists. Generalists do basically the same things as the senior pastor and assist the senior pastor in her or his duties when they are overloaded. Often these associate pastors' job descriptions say "to serve as the pastor may direct."¹¹ Generalists usually move on and move up to serve another church as senior or solo pastor.

Specialists offer particular gifts in one area for which they are given responsibility. Specialists become career associate pastors more often than generalists.¹² Some specialists are ordained and others do not need to be. Ordination or licensure of an associate is another area where there is flexibility depending on the needs of the congregation.

Radcliffe offers other interesting distinctions to ponder when considering an associate: Is she a functionary who gets the job done or amateur who does it for the love of it? Is she career clergy who is in it for life or is it a job she does until something else calls to her? The author does an excellent job of withholding judgment on these options and simply names them and acknowledges the blessings of all.

¹⁰ Radcliffe, 62.

¹¹ Radcliffe, 63.

¹² Radcliffe, 64.

Radcliffe stresses the critical importance of the senior/associate relationship as the single most professional relationship the associate has.¹³ The senior usually sets the tone for communication, integrity, salary and benefits, and authority. According to Radcliffe, the associate would do well to seek a supportive person with whom to serve, as this person can make the entire experience a satisfying or frustrating one.

Martin E. Hawkins' book, *The Associate Pastor: Second Chair, Not Second Best*, offered a completely different perspective. The premise is that hierarchy is a God-ordained structure that should be respected.¹⁴ Hawkins asserts that associates should learn to be content in a lesser position than the senior, because all positions have their own value. Hawkins admits that the glamour associated with being a senior pastor is desirable, and suggests that coming to terms with something less requires real faith.¹⁵

Hawkins equates assistant pastor and associate pastor and uses the terms interchangeably. However, his reflection on his own experiences as an assistant pastor included things like carrying the senior pastor's briefcase and helping out behind the scenes. This sounds more like the position of assistant to the pastor, although for him it did lead to preaching opportunities. The role of assistant or associate pastor seems mainly to be protecting the senior pastor from overwork, unnecessary conflict, and general strain.

There are some limitations in this book: Hawkins does not believe women should be ministers, although he says they are useful in teaching other women. He does offer a chapter on the role of the pastor's wife. This chapter references her inherent value being

¹³ Radcliffe, 82.

¹⁴ Martin E. Hawkins, *The Associate Pastor: Second Chair, Not Second Best*, (Nashville, TN; Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), 3.

¹⁵ Hawkins, 2.

less than that of the senior pastor and also her freedom not to be an unpaid church worker.¹⁶ Within this framework, Hawkins offers some solid advice about communication, humility and honesty, qualities with which it is hard to argue.

Evelyn and James Whitehead have offered a book titled *The Promise of Partnership: a Model for Collaborative Ministry*. In this book the authors look at partnership in ministry from several perspectives. They address the great potential of collaborative ministry, the transformational route to becoming partners, and the work and play involved in functioning in ministry in this new way. Their basic thesis is that it is possible and beneficial to shift from what they call a parent/child model to a real partnership. They outline how church and family systems have both adopted hierarchical structures almost interchangeably (Father priests and Mother Superior with everyone else down below) and address the ways in which the hierarchical church has been detrimental to individuals and society. They even touch on the degradation of women in the Catholic Church's being so severe that women and even the men who love them and marry them are not worthy of serving as priests.¹⁷ This book begins to tip the traditionally structured church upside-down.

The Whiteheads explain that a parent/child relationship creates dependency and emphasizes continued dependency unless consciously liberated, whereas partnership creates independent, responsible people. They list the wounds of hierarchical leadership, which include not just the limiting and subjugation of lesser people, but also the limiting

¹⁶ Hawkins, 177-180.

¹⁷ Evelyn Eaton Whitehead and James D. Whitehead, *The Promise of Partnership: a Model for Collaborative Ministry* (Lincoln, NE; iUniverse.com, Inc., 2000), 3-10.

of the leaders in their roles.¹⁸ Forcing leaders to be more than human, superhuman, or beyond human need is its own kind of wounding. The Whiteheads lift up the healing and richness of a shared ministry with a shared vision. They name the priesthood of all believers as more valuable than Father/congregation style leadership.

I agree that a shift from hierarchical or paternalistic authority would be liberating for the congregation and its leaders, and a move away from Father language around religious leaders would benefit and empower women and children. While this book speaks from the Catholic tradition, other traditions may not employ priests or the paternalistic language presented above. However, other traditions could still benefit from the proposed shift from patriarchal hierarchy to a more inclusive and collaborative model. Furthermore, the parent/child model the Whiteheads propose is exactly the staffing model that has been replicated time and time again between seniors and associates in the United Church of Christ, with limited success and duration. If a church uses a parent/child model for its staff, it must be prepared for the child to grow up and leave home to start her or his own life. If partners are established from the beginning, the relationship is more likely to endure.

Three authors - Nash, Pimlott and Nash - collaborated on a book they titled *Skills for Collaborative Ministry*. They introduce themselves by confessing that they all had different ideas of what collaboration meant when they started. They ended up sitting in the same room with their computers as they worked independently as they wrote this book, but occasionally asking each other for help, advice, input or guidance. Their book offers solid skills to help anyone work better with others in ministry or other fields. It is

¹⁸ Whitehead and Whitehead, 28-29.

as much a handbook on how to work well with others as it is a guide for ministry. It is based on the synergy they found in the collaboration of the Trinity, shared with us as evidenced in the sacrament of Holy Communion.¹⁹ According to the authors the mere words “Let us pray,” indicate we are all included in the ministry that we share.

Together they explore the pros and cons of collaborative ministry. “At its best collaborative ministry brings an energy and synergy to what we do and enables us to achieve something we could never have done alone.”²⁰ Yet all three authors agree that successful collaborative ministry depends on the quality of the leader. The senior pastor’s leadership is the most common reason other staff leave. A leader can see him or herself as a superhuman or as the minister of unity. “At its worst, collaborative ministry is a nightmare that we wish had never gotten into, and we fixate on the negative connotations of the word ‘collaborator’ realizing the mistake we have made.” The better leaders are “educative, empowering, participative and committed to equal opportunities.” The power to collaborate resides with the senior pastor’s becoming willing to work, or at least lead, more collaboratively. The skills covered in this book include group development, group facilitation, reflecting, vision building, teamwork, supervision, conflict management, diversity, and evaluation.²¹ It is a thorough rendering of the tools of the trade, and the lessons and the skills would apply to virtually any collaborative work setting.

Stephen Pickard is an Australian author who has written a large work titled, *Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry*. This is not a how-to book of skills.

¹⁹ Sally Nash, Jo Pimlott and Paul Nash, *Skills for Collaborative Ministry* (Great Britain: SPCK Library of Ministry, 2008), 7.

²⁰ Nash, Pimlott and Nash, 1.

²¹ Nash, Pimlott and Nash, 1-6.

It is a deep exploration into the theology behind collaboration. His thesis is that Christians are members “one of another,” and this creates energy and joy in ministry and empowers the Church in an age of mission.²²

Pickard offers a history of ministry over the last hundred years. He proposes that where there has been a strong Christology, there is a greater divide between ordained and general ministries, whereas where pneumatology is dominant, dividing lines between ministries fade sometimes to the point where different ministries blur into each other. However, even when traditionally structured ministries touch each other, there is typically a one sided benefit assumed.

Little real progress in understanding has been made. This is evident in the knotty little problem of the relationship between those ministries for which people are ordained in the Church and those ministries exercised by the wider body of the baptized. I have never heard or read a single sentence that explains how the ministries of the baptized contribute and establish the ministries of deacons, priests or bishops. There is a disconnect here despite extensive explorations of the Trinitarian basis for all ministry.²³

Pickard looks to science, “evolutionary thinking as applied to social systems” in particular, as a guide to the concept of order, and then applies it to the household of God. He names resilience, identity and continuation of institutional life as key to survival especially in a rapidly changing external environment. Yet, “sharp boundaries, poor information flow and inability to adapt seriously impede the ability of an institution to fulfill its purpose.” He concludes, “Dynamically ordered systems with richly interrelated rather than disjunctive or implosive structures require and are constituted by similar

²² Stephen Pickard, *Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry: Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology* (Burlington, VT; Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 139.

²³ Pickard, 125.

interrelated and dynamic forms of leadership.”²⁴ Considering the rapid rate of cultural change we face and the sluggishness of the traditional church’s response, his merging of science and theology creates a strong argument for the continuation of existing leadership but in a new way that yields better results.

Biblically, he asserts that since we are all of one body, we are called to mutually represent each other, not rule over and exclude one another. Pickard refocuses our traditional view of naming the body’s separate, individual parts to appreciating the work and gifts of others through our commonality. As we come to share gifts, we come to commune with each other in a new way. In this way, he says, we are healed and reconciled.²⁵

Pickard’s work is a massive, life-changing work for the church. The depths he plumbs to undo the habits that keep us in the trenches is equal to the energy with which he reconfigures the way we are the church together. He is exploring sacred order, as Hawkins did. However, Pickard is doing it not to maintain the status quo but to transform it. This is a book that not only shatters traditional hierarchy but does it from inside the church. He raises collaboration beyond a useful, practical, popular or profitable business model to a God-breathed place of healing and love. Pickard shows us how and why the church in particular is called to be collaborative. This is the most powerful work on the subject of collaborative ministry in the oeuvre.

The works regarding Associate Pastors and collaborative leadership in the church each have their own focus. Associate pastors can work to increase their value through

²⁴ Pickard, 137.

²⁵ Pickard, 236.

specializing in a particular area or providing support to the senior pastor. One thing is obvious: The associate needs to be clear with the congregation and other staff members about his or her job description and what it is he or she is supposed to do. The works on collaboration are most powerful when they draw from a theology that supports working together, whether that is a strong pneumatology, a compelling sense of the Trinity, the priesthood of all believers or the sacrament of communion. When seen through the churches' own particular light, the cause for collaboration shines brightly.

Other disciplines have also gravitated toward collaborative leadership in recent years. For example, leaders in sports, music, libraries, and business have all found methods of working collaboratively to be beneficial to their organizations. Each discipline functions slightly differently, yet each focuses around the central idea of bringing out the best in everyone, regardless of their rank or level.

John Wooden inadvertently built a sports dynasty as the Head Coach of UCLA's basketball team. His leadership emphasized that each member of the team should contribute, specifically and precisely, his very best. His book is filled with nuggets and stories of how the focus was never on winning; it was always on doing one's best.²⁶ Wooden taught "team spirit," a phrase in which he sought to capture not just the efficient working of a smooth running machine, but also a group that shared a heart and soul. He first defined it as "a willingness to sacrifice personal interest or glory for the welfare of all," but he later amended the definition to say "an eagerness..." The willingness was not enough. He was often quoted as saying, "The star of the team is the team." Each member of the team was as valuable as another.

²⁶ John Wooden and Steve Jamison, *Wooden on Leadership* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 122.

Wooden referenced the Indianapolis 500 race and gave credit to the team that took care of the car as well as the driver, who usually gets all the credit. Wooden was quoted as saying, “Don’t let the wheels fall off.”

The driver going around the track at 200 miles per hour is helpless without the rest of the team’s filling its “lesser” roles. One man is solely responsible for putting fuel in the car during the pit stop; another is responsible for removing and replacing lug nuts; another takes off the worn tire. The man responsible for putting fuel into the race car must do it without making a mistake or another team member – the one doing “nothing” but holding the fire extinguisher – will be called on to prevent total disaster.²⁷

Each person needs to understand the value of their specific job in order to take pride in doing it to the best of his or her ability, to contribute to the shared vision of the team. The team and each individual needs to be in balance for this to work well. Finally, it was this leader’s vision to “make greatness attainable by all.” Although Wooden does not use the word “collaborate,” his tenets of good team spirit are an excellent example of collaboration on the basketball court. Each player is valued, has a specific task for which she or he is responsible, and contributes to the vision shared by the team.

People who work in libraries face many of the same challenges that church workers face. Both groups can be seen as struggling to succeed in a field that is rapidly changing. Both groups draw from limited resources.²⁸ Both groups have staff members with varied training and backgrounds and in some situations little or no training. Often these workers feel ill equipped to help with the vast number or varied nature of requests their job contains. In a recent handbook for librarians, the challenges of library work were described like this: “The number and rate of changes around the world, the insatiable

²⁷ Wooden and Jamison, 121.

²⁸ Lori Reed and Paul Signorelli, *Workplace Learning and Leadership: A Handbook for Library and Nonprofit Trainers* (Chicago, IL; American Library Association, 2011), 10.

need for accurate information combined with a torrential overload of resources, and the need for continual learning just so we can remain professionally and intellectually afloat demand creativity and innovation.” The sense of serving in any number of different capacities in a field that seeks to respond to the needs of many with diverse resources and limited funding is familiar to clergy.

The librarians are taught to treat their non-profit like a community of learning. The techniques they are taught encourage learning and leadership from the grass roots level on up. The more they can train their patrons to seek and find on their own and pass those skills along to other patrons, the stronger the community becomes.

One way of improving the librarians’ training skills is to allow them time for continuing education. This is a piece of professional development often set aside amid the deluge of interruptions and demands of the job. Yet becoming a more current, more effective and more skilled trainer has important ramifications. Sharing knowledge through informal mentoring, educating around technological advances, or encouraging emerging leaders makes the community grow.

Pastors and other church leaders could benefit from a reminder of these lessons. So often it feels easier for the pastor to just “do it myself” instead of teaching someone else to do it. Yet in the long run, building a sense that the whole community is learning and serving together strengthens the whole institution.

The job of an orchestra conductor is frequently lifted up as a parallel to being a pastor. Both institutions have many in the ranks and one at the helm, hopefully working in harmony. Both orchestras and churches are traditionally hierarchical. “Orchestras add one more element to the mix: a single manager who leads the organization in preparation

(rehearsal) and execution (performance) – the conductor. A conductor’s work... might also describe a successful CEO leading any organization.” The nature of the person in this job can be benevolent or tyrannical. But the control is completely centralized.

Conductors are also specifically trained to micromanage. They select the music and the musicians who play it and determine exactly how each piece will sound by making thousands of decisions about tempo, phrasing, volume, and balance – details that govern each musician’s playing and ultimately the character of the musical performance. Conductors are expected to have strong opinions, backed by knowledge about the technical capabilities and challenges of each instrument of the orchestra. These opinions are rarely open for question or discussion.²⁹

Orchestra conductors traditionally exemplify the ultimate pinnacle of a hierarchical structure. Their authority is simply not questioned. Although from the audience’s perspective, being the leader of a large group of people exquisitely coordinated to achieve something much greater than themselves seems like an ideal analogy for church leadership, it is in fact in direct opposition to the idea of collaborative leadership and the communion of saints. Ben Zander, founder and conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, responding to the question as to whether an orchestra conductor was a good model for business leadership, said, “It’s the worst! The conductor is the last bastion of totalitarianism in the world – the one person whose authority never gets questioned. There’s a saying: Every dictator aspires to be a conductor.” Mark Worrell, jazz guitarist, says, “It would not be an exaggeration to state that the symphony itself is a mass celebration of authoritarianism – perhaps even charismatic dictatorship.”³⁰ The image of a conductor does not align with the reality of the position.

²⁹ Harvey Seifter, and Peter Economy, *Leadership Ensemble: Lessons in Collaborative Management from the World’s Only Conductorless Orchestra* (New York, NY; Times Books, Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2001), 9.

There is one orchestra in New York City that has developed an alternative model. The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra functions without a conductor. Leadership is both shared and rotated among the members in areas of musical leadership and administration. There are five key elements to their model. For the musical decisions in each piece, five to ten musicians are selected to form “the core” of musical leadership. These are recognized as “the first among equals.”³¹ The “core” develops some strategies for rehearsals for small groups. Then the groups are brought together to see how the balance is. As the concert approaches, musicians listen to the whole from the hall and make final adjustments. Finally the concert is given, and afterward the members discuss possible further refinements for the future. “The focal point of the Orpheus Process is the musicians themselves.” The musicians all feel a strong sense of ownership and satisfaction.

There are eight Orpheus Principles on which the orchestra’s success is founded.

- Put power in the hands of the people doing the work.
- Encourage individual responsibility.
- Create clarity of roles.
- Share and rotate leadership.
- Foster horizontal teamwork.
- Learn to listen, learn to talk.
- Seek consensus, and build creative structures that favor consensus.
- Dedicate passionately to your mission.³²

Whether these principles are applied to an orchestra, a business or a church setting, the results will likely be the same:

- Increased employee engagement in their jobs.
- Improved worker moral in response to increased management trust.

³⁰ Seifter and Economy, 10.

³¹ Seifter and Economy, 12.

³² Seifter and Economy, 16.

- New ideas, fresh energy, and increased employee commitment to achieving the corporation's goals.
- Decreased employee absenteeism and rates of turnover.³³

The Orpheus Chamber Orchestra has effectively turned its institution upside-down, and for those involved it works much better. This method of collaboration still uses some leadership, but it is shared and developed among all participants, not just a few.

The new global economy has changed the way businesses run. While a leader is often still required, his or her function is to facilitate collaboration among all departments and employees. Thomas Kayser uses the analogy of whitewater rapids to describe the changes the global market has brought to the business world. Rapids are ranked by class: Class I is easy, Class VI is unrunnable. He suggests the pace and intensity of business today is Class V, which means the most turbulent of the runnable rivers and rapids with continuous unavoidable features such as strong rapids, large waves, big holes, unpredictable currents, dangerous obstructions, and a serious risk of going overboard.³⁴

Traditional bureaucracy is too rigid, too slow to respond to today's needs, too expensive to maintain, and lacks creativity and initiative. Compared to a traditional business model, a structure with more collaboration would have reduced redundancy of work, more flexibility in each position, and be more fast acting, team oriented and customer driven. The ability to respond quickly to the demands of customers is of the utmost importance, as customers have changed, too. They are less patient and more

³³ Seifter and Economy, 21.

³⁴ Thomas A. Kayser, *Building Team Power: How to Unleash the Collaborative Genius of Teams for Increased Engagement, Productivity, and Results* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2011), 5.

particular than ever before. Businesses need to reduce the “it’s not my job” mentality so often held by lower level employees.³⁵

In business, collaboration means more than just working together. In short, it means that relationships are treated like genuine partnerships, that people aim to create superior new value together, that obligation is broadly distributed, that understanding and solidarity increase, that communication is frequent and intensive, and interpersonal context is rich. Kayser lists three structural ingredients for successful collaboration in businesses: shared goals, interdependence and complementary skills, and accountability. He also lists three behavioral ingredients necessary that are character or integrity, commitment and authentic communication.³⁶ When these six factors are part of the business model, there are remarkably positive results both inside the business and outside the business. Kayser asserts that there are several strategies to encourage these behaviors and structures. They are building mutual trust, sharing in decision-making, building consensus, managing conflict, delegating effectively, and solving problems as a team.³⁷ All of these leadership skills will encourage a collaborative spirit among business employees.

Parts of the transformed collaborative business model apply to the church setting. Certainly the “customer” has changed, and the need to respond quickly is important. Being cost effective is important in the church, and using the available staff to cover all the duties would be more effective with a degree of flexibility and some specialization

³⁵ Kayser, 15.

³⁶ Kayser, 21.

³⁷ Kayser, vi.

attained by all. Sharing the vision for the end result, being committed and working with integrity all apply to church workers as well. In the business model, there is still a leader, and decisions still get made, but there is a greater sense of ownership among the other employees because of their valued contributions.

In summation, strategies for working more collaboratively have evolved in different fields with some similar characteristics. Committed ownership and investment from all parties regardless of level of leadership, specific responsibilities or valued specialties for all employees, some level of group decision making, and the building of a consensus or shared vision by all involved parties transcend any one field when striving for the benefits of a collaborative leadership model.

All of these qualities improve the traditional lot of the associate pastor. She would be committed and invested in the larger church; she would have an area or areas for which she would be responsible, reflecting a specialty, yet maintaining some flexibility to fill in as needed; she would be given authority publicly so the congregation would understand her role, her opinion would be heard as part of decision making processes; and she would share in the vision of the future of the church held by the senior pastor and elected leadership.

By both being part of a team, and contributing uniquely to the church staff arrangement and congregational needs, the collaborative associate pastor's value is raised; and this contributes to her satisfaction which hopefully translates into a longer tenure in that position on the staff. That said, the junior associate does not usually instigate a collaborative staffing model. The senior pastor, head coach, first violin, or CEO is usually responsible for changing the model from a traditionally hierarchical one

to a more collaborative structure. Still, the associate is capable of being a great team player, strengthening her skills in an area of specialty, and contributing from her strengths to the shared vision of the future of the church. The combination of collaboration and autonomy creates a position where there is support for her ministry and space enough in which to do it.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Hypothesis and Methodology

The hypothesis of this ministry project is that the nature of the senior/associate working relationship is directly related to the associate pastor's job satisfaction and tenure. A traditional hierarchical staffing model results in less satisfaction and a shorter tenure for the associate, while a more collaborative model results in greater satisfaction and a longer tenure. To increase a female associate pastor's fulfillment and stability on a church staff, awareness is needed to increase in a congregation and among other staff members the need for collaboration among all staff and congregation, especially between senior and associate pastors, with particular emphasis on establishing the authority of the associate pastor.

Creating a sustainable job description for an associate is a challenge. In the Southwest Association of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ, there is a long lineage of women becoming associate pastors. These pastors will be surveyed and interviewed regarding their experiences pertaining to fulfillment and stability in their callings, identifying both the joys and challenges. Senior pastors will be asked to contribute parallel information. This information will serve as the baseline for congregational growth through a series of six focus group meetings of parishioners of the

church. Through the focus group meetings, the congregation's expectations, beliefs, and capacity for learning and change will be measured and recorded. This study will lead, in conjunction with conversations with the senior pastor, to the creation of a job description and call documents for the associate pastor that the congregation will accept and that will contribute to stability and fulfillment on the staff.

The associate clergy called upon to share their experiences numbered fifteen. Of those, nine submitted responses. These pastors ranged in experience from one year to twenty-seven years as an associate pastor, and they served from 1981 – 2015, although one response was solicited from a male associate who served the same church from 1966-1983. Another response was from a male who had served as an associate pastor at the advent of his career, and then he served as the Associate Conference Minister overseeing placement and function of local pastors for about forty years. An invitation to respond was sent to a group of three Benedictine sisters who have served together in a nearby monastery for many years, but they declined to participate.

Of the women who did respond, one earned a PhD and taught in theological education until retirement, one served faithfully until she had a heart attack and then scaled back, one became the senior pastor after the previous senior pastor's retirement, one became a senior pastor at another church, two remain part time associates, and one is serving part time while also going to seminary.

The two who became senior pastors have female associates. These are the most collaborative working relationships and seem to be the most satisfying. The women who served with male senior pastors in the 1980s and 1990s had the most difficult time establishing authority and getting a clear job description and designation of duties. Even

so, it was possible to find satisfaction in the work of ministry, as long as the female associate was clear in her own mind what she was doing.

Nine senior pastors were invited to respond in kind. Out of these nine, six responded to the survey. Their years in ministry were great and their experience vast. Several had worked with a series of associates that yielded especially rich insights. Two were female, and four were male.

The responses were compiled and analyzed. From this wealth of information, classes were designed for congregational use. Topics to be covered were traditional staff arrangements, why pastors leave, how a congregation can support its pastors, traditional delegation of duties, the value of a stable staff, our denomination's current call and hiring process and how it has changed from past processes, collaborative arrangements in the secular world, the benefits of collaboration, places in the world where women's leadership is not welcome, how the church has traditionally treated women, Joseph and Pharaoh in collaborative leadership, Paul and Titus in collaborative leadership, Adam and Eve and what it means to be made in the image of God, and what women's leadership looks like in the church.

Participants in the congregational focus group were self-selected, except the moderator and the associate pastor's Pastoral Relations Committee who were especially invited. The senior pastor was not present by joint decision of the senior and associate pastor. The general attitude in the group ranged from theologically and politically conservative to progressive. Of sixteen participants, four were male and twelve were female. One woman is a retired clergyperson. Attendance at the sessions averaged 61%.

The researcher's priorities were to establish how this congregation sees women's leadership in church, to measure the rate of absorption of new ideas, and to identify any particular resistance to the authority of an associate pastor. The objectives were to improve the class's attitude toward women associate pastors and for the class to show some improved recognition of the differences between hierarchical patriarchy and feminist collaboration.

Implementation

In June, 2014, a survey was developed and distributed to fourteen associate pastors. The goal was to expand the base of information regarding the experience of the female associate pastor in the field of ministry in the Southwest Association of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ. The researcher had her own experiences to draw on as well, and wanted to know if those experiences were typical or unique, and to what degree others shared similar challenges, particularly around stability and fulfillment. Eight associate surveys were returned. They offered a extensive body of information that largely supported the researcher's hypothesis that stability and fulfillment are difficult to achieve as an associate pastor, collaboration is rare but would help, and the senior pastor and congregation are important parts of that equation.

The next set of questions to be addressed was how did senior pastors view associate pastors? What did senior pastors view as valuable about having an associate? What did senior pastors view as valuable in the associates' work and ministry? Are there areas where senior pastors could be more helpful in establishing authority, stability and fulfillment in the associates' job description, staff relationships, relationship with the

congregation, and ministry? The researcher developed a second survey geared toward senior pastors with experience with associates. This survey was distributed to nine senior pastors. Six senior surveys were returned. These also yielded a vast amount of information outlining the senior pastors' experience and perceptions of working with an associate pastor. Several reflected the difficulty of working together well in what seems to be a "moving target" field such as ministry, where the unexpected and urgent interruption is the norm. Yet there was also information gathered that supported the researcher's hypothesis that the senior/associate relationship is a significant "make or break" piece of the puzzle, honest communication is another key, and there is still room for improvement.

With the state of the associate pastor and senior pastor fairly well established, triangulation of information was completed through interaction with members of a local congregation, through a series of six classes. The information gathered through the two pastoral surveys was used as a base for compiling a pre-test that would establish the congregation's understanding of the state of their ministerial staff. Questions were explored such as, were they aware of the value of a stable staff? Were they aware of the value of their relationship with the associate pastor? How hierarchical or collaborative would they say their staff is? Do they perceive the staff to be working together successfully, and if so to what degree? This pre-test also was intended to measure their capacity for change, adaptation, and growth through education in feminist theology, women's leadership throughout the last century, and exposure to other disciplines that work collaboratively. The test was administered and yielded a bounty of information.

The congregation members attended a series of six focus group classes, participating in lectures, class and small group discussions. At the conclusion of the six sessions, the researcher administered a post-test, asking the same questions as in the pre-test, to gauge growth and adaptability in the congregation.

The researcher then analyzed the data from the associate survey responses, the senior survey responses, and the congregation's test responses, and drew conclusions for recommendations as to how each faction could help improve the fulfillment and stability of the associate pastor.

Questions and Answers

Associate Pastor Survey and Responses

The respondents to the Associate Pastor Survey were as follows:

- a. Associate for one year in uncalled lay leadership position while finishing seminary 2013-2014.
- b. First woman associate at a church from 1981-1986 while finishing PhD.
- c. Associate for seven years, 2006-2013; now senior with female associate.
- d. Part-time associate on staff seven years, 2007-2014, with senior and another associate.
- e. Associate for seven of eighteen years in ministry until suffering heart attack, 1996-2003.
- f. Associate for nine years, now senior with female associate 2004-2013.
- g. Part-time associate, also social worker, with female senior, 2004-2014.

- h. Male associate for twenty-seven years, 1966-1983, under three different senior pastors, at the same church.

The survey and the responses received are as follows:

- 1) How long have you served as an Associate Pastor?
 - a) one year
 - b) four to five years
 - c) seven years
 - d) seven years
 - e) seven years
 - f) nine years
 - g) ten years
 - h) twenty-seven years (male)
- 2) Was your original goal to be an Associate Pastor, Senior Pastor, or something else?
 - a) Currently a [seminary] student – more interested in following the Spirit than obtaining any goals. (In other words I am challenged by titles such as “associate” and “senior.”)
 - b) Something else. I was hoping to go into theological education as a professor, working on my PhD at a nearby university.
 - c) I was open to calls.
 - d) My goal has been to be in ministry. My current role as associate suits my skills and calling. I have never had a goal of being a senior pastor.

e) I had no goals except that I would serve faithfully AND strongly feel a call to that position. The last church I served was returning to the church where I began my ministries 20 years earlier. I knew I did not want the senior position. I had seen too many seniors at [church] leave that position beaten and depressed. It seemed to be a joy-killer.

f) My goal was to be an associate.

g) Something else. I wanted to serve a church with a strong social action component.

But I saw myself as part of a staff.

h) I was open to God's leading, but the initial, original goal was to be an associate pastor.

3) Was the job description clear when you met with the search committee? Was it negotiable?

a) My position is not a called position. I was interviewed by the Faith Formation Committee.

b) Nothing was clear. But once they (he, the senior pastor) agreed to hire me, together we came to an agreement.

c) Job description was clear, but wasn't necessarily accurate. Not negotiable – accept the "as otherwise directed."

d) Yes it was clear.

e) I remember little about the earliest job description. What the church wanted seemed to be "another body." What the Senior Minister wanted at that time was ME. No other candidate was interviewed. What I wanted was a way out of the

position if it didn't work out. Therefore I was technically contracted for the HALF TIME associate position renewable yearly. I do remember as the years passed and as another Senior was hired, being surprised that some tasks and expectations were added without my knowledge.

- f) My job description was clear, and over time my duties evolved to reflect the gifts I brought to the church.
 - g) The position here is one the senior pastor and I created. I was a full-time social worker who wanted to remain in ministry, so we created a part-time position to allow me to use my gifts.
 - h) The description was in detailed, printed form and I understood and felt challenged by the job description. I did not feel it was appropriate to negotiate.
- 4) What are your areas of responsibility? How were they determined? Have they changed at all? If so, how did that happen?
- a) Faith Formation: "Sunday School," cross generational Faith Formation, confirmation, Our Whole Lives, Youth Group, Worship Leadership – Children's sermon and sermon 1x/month, some pastoral care.
 - b) Essentially, (a) I made it a requirement that I be in the liturgy every week and preach once a month (I claimed to hire an ordained woman would require at least that since I would be the first woman.) (b) Eventually I found I did (a) above, plus what he did not like to do, mainly administration and hospital calling!

- c) Responsibility was 1) lay ministry 2) new members 3) adult education.
Determined by church, not followed by clergy leader. It has changed, based on gifts of ministers on staff.
- d) Christian Education, and spiritual formation, programming for children youth, assist in worship, preach occasionally. Provide some programming for families, which includes winter retreat.
- e) My areas of responsibility included new member evangelism, adult education and pastoral care. I was the HEART of the ministry while the Senior was the HEAD. I was good at what I did. But it did take a toll on my spiritual, physical and emotional well-being.
- f) I staffed multiple committees: Missions, Community Life and Pastoral Care. I was encouraged by the Senior Pastor to take on any ministry opportunity that interested me.
- g) My areas of responsibility change according to the needs of the church. When we have been between senior pastors I have filled in until we could call an intentional interim. Currently I assist with preaching and visiting and other pastoral care.
- h) Christian Ed. For all ages, esp. children and youth. Participating in Sunday worship. Determined by need, according to search comm. And my understanding. Also, job description asked me to do calling and outreach, occasional preaching. Didn't change much. "I rolled with the tide of need!"
- 5) Where does your job description especially reflect your gifts? How did that come about?

- a) I love being in this spiritually new “place” the church seems to be entering and exploring the second reformation through recognizing “worship” in new ways & places – home, community, technology, social media, mission
 - b) Based on above (a) and (b). Yes, doing admin was/is a gift of mine – so this worked well. What I didn’t know when I began was that he would leave town each summer from Memorial Day to Labor Day and I would be come the Senior Pastor – and do everything. Oh – did I say I was half-time?!?!? And paid for half time?!?! And full-time PhD student?!
 - c) Pastoral Care – no one else was doing it.
 - d) Creating, expanding, developing a vibrant children and youth ministry program.
 - e) See above.
 - f) My job description focused more on adult ed., but my gifts lay with pastoral care and worship leadership. I was encouraged to do what I did best!
 - g) Since I have a MSW and a teaching certificate as well as an MDiv, I can choose areas that need those skills. I write a historical column for the church newsletter and also help with adult education.
 - h) Being intensely involved with children, youth and adults on a personal basis – identifying with people on a one to one basis – letting others know they were special as children of God, attending youth games, etc., and cheering them on.
- 6) Are there things you would like to do that you feel you cannot? Why or why not?
- a) Most of the limits in my position are due to the boundaries of time . . . as well as the process of developing strong lay leadership – it is happening, but slowly!

- b) No. I was generously welcomed by the Senior Pastor. He encouraged and appreciated my colleagueship and involvement in just about everything.
- c) I was constrained by the senior minister.
- d) No.
- e) See (4).
- f) No.
- g) I am very happy with the current position.
- h) Yes, looking back, I wish I had been a bit more evangelical in my conversations with people, especially the high school youth. I hoped they would understand how God works in and through us by my “works.”
- 7) Describe the similarities and differences in skill sets that you and the Senior Pastor possess.
- a) The senior pastor is not motivated by technology or social media – but “lets” me explore, utilize, engage in this area (yeah!)
- b) His strength was preaching. I was Ok preacher but certainly improved as the years rolled by and I got used to doing – and loving – what I had not planned to do.
- c) Senior: Academic, not relational. Unwilling to give up areas of power (seeming).
 Associate: focus on pastoral care; Relational.
- d) I’m probably more knowledgeable with Christian Education for children and youth. He’s more skilled, knowledgeable in church administration, worship, planning, leading adults. Similar – we both have preaching skills, pastoral care skills.

- e) The two seniors that I worked with were similar in some ways. Neither one was truly comfortable in the pastoral duties of the office. Even though both men promised to visit the sick and others in need of care, neither seemed willing or capable. In 1997, the year that I began, the search committee and staff were less than honest about the problems associated with the Senior. Only later did I learn some truths, the most disheartening being that he shared confidences. He pathologically lied and he had a nasty habit of sabotaging new programs and staff. I threatened to quit if he continued. He retired shortly thereafter. The second senior I worked with did not do visiting either. He really was uncomfortable with people. (Shy? Arrogant? Introverted?) He was brilliant and liked to study. He loved to preach. He liked to be alone. Yet different from the first senior, he kept confidences, which was a nice switch! I asked our Association Minister early on in my seven years as associate whether he could name any male senior/female associate ministry teams in the [state] Conference that were successful. He said NO. GULP!
- f) The Senior Pastor was a talented administrator and preacher. I was much better at pastoral care and leadership development, volunteer recruitment, etc.
- g) I'm not sure I look at similarities and differences very much. The senior pastor is skillful in most areas required of a minister. Sometimes I can be helpful with issues that require some social work knowledge.
- h) All 3 senior pastors under which I served were very good preachers, administrators – different from me. Similarities would include love for people and

the church, excellence in conduct of worship. All three let me call the “shots” for youth work and Christian Ed.

- 8) Is there a sense that you both can do everything or do you have separate duties?
 - a) We recognize we each have different gifts and are energized by the Spirit in different ways – which leads to us having different duties.
 - b) He could do a lot of things – just did not want to. His weakest link was administration. In that way we complimented each other. It was a multiple staff, large congregation so working with others to create a staff team was key. I could help that to happen.
 - c) Let's just say – duties were not defined, could have been more separation to cover more ground.
 - d) We both have separate duties. Yet in his absence, I can function fully in the role of leader.
 - e) No answer.
 - f) We both could do everything. At one time or another during the time I worked at [church], we both did all parts of the other's job.
 - g) We have separate duties, given that I work here part-time.
 - h) Yes, we both had separate duties which sometimes would overlap. Both senior pastor and I pretty much stayed to our own duties. We both did hospital calling, visitations in nursing homes, etc. Seniors did most of funerals and weddings. Both of us baptisms and communion.

- 9) Who does weddings? Funerals? Baptisms? How is that determined?
- a) Senior Pastor – due to my status – not licensed/ordained so baptisms & communion are “out.”
 - b) Weddings: we took turns. Funerals and baptisms: mostly we did them together when he was in town. We made this agreement after I’d been there a few months.
 - c) Associate mostly. Some by request of family. Weddings – Sr. did not want to do.
 - d) I rarely do weddings or funerals. But I prefer it this way. I have done baptisms.
Often the three of us (senior, me, and other associate) decide together.
 - e) Weddings, funerals, etc. always went to the one who was asked by the member/non member.
 - f) We divided them equally, most of the time. I liked funerals, so I did more. Senior Pastor liked weddings, he did more.
 - g) Usually the senior pastor does these tasks unless I am requested by a family because of a long relationship.
 - h) See last sentence #8. Job description.
- 10) Who decided what your compensation package would include?
- a) Trustees/Faith Formation Committee
 - b) He did. It didn’t “include” anything as I recall – no insurance, no pension, no housing allowance, etc. Again this was all new – 1st woman and 1st part-time Associate.
 - c) Congregation.
 - d) Leadership team of church.

- e) ???? The treasurer? Search committee? Who knows? I was very naïve. I would be more bold now.
- f) A committee staffed by the Senior Pastor. For 9 years, all staff received the same cost of living increase, senior pastor included.
- g) The first pastor with whom I worked and I decided on compensation – basically I volunteer my time – my choice, unless specific needs arise.
- h) Search committee/Trustees Board.

11) Is Continuing Education offered? Have you taken it? What did you do? Did it help you in your Associate position? If so, how?

- a) Yes – and Yes: Took part in the Progressive Youth Ministry Conference and am participating in the Center for Progressive Renewal's Youth Ministry Coaching.
- b) I was in the PhD program at the University.
- c) Yes – Yes – Pastoral care classes. Yes –helped broaden understanding context
- d) Yes! I just finished my first year attending Clergy Clinic in Family and Emotional Process led by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. Yes it helped me in all aspects of my personal life and ministry.
- e) I was offered continuing ed. And sabbatical. I made sure to take it. My sabbatical was spent in Iona and it helped the church in many ways through programming and church trips to the island that still continue.
- f) Continuing Ed was offered. I had more money than the Senior Pastor for continuing Ed. I took it every year. I went to the Festival of Homiletics, Pastoral Conference, I did a unit of CPE one year, etc.

- g) I have to be involved in continuing education to maintain my social work license.

From time to time church-related continuing education has worked out.

- h) Yes, yes, attended national C.E. conferences a few times. Yes, it helped expand my understanding enlightening me about national trends, horizons, etc.

12) Has the staff done any intentional work on establishing, maintaining or growing staff relationships? Was it effective?

- a) No ... though I have asked about doing something ...
- b) Very little outside of weekly planning meetings.. – but I was able, with his blessing, to bring some “thinking and team” into those settings.
- c) Not in the last – we do now.
- d) We meet regularly. We sometimes do day retreats – once or twice a yr. Yes – effective. We spend time sharing more of our personal journeys which makes us feel more connected.
- e) Our church staff is fabulous now. They deeply respect one another and the gifts that are brought to the church. [The church] is moving in a wonderful direction. But we have been through a lot of grief and hard work. I love the fact that four out of five staff are gay. I do remain a member of the church I served. My grandchildren are being raised in a church that is fun, inclusive, warm and theological spot on.
- f) The senior pastor and I had a great relationship and talked daily. We never followed an intentional program.
- g) Yes, we have worked with the Mennonite peace group in Lombard. It was helpful.

- h) Yes, we used to have staff meetings – sometimes once a month, conferring weekly. Yes, very effective.

13) What do you think are the most helpful characteristics of a successful and fulfilling Senior/Associate relationship?

- a) I come from an interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary background in healthcare. I wish the collaborative aspect I experienced in that vocation was reflected in the parish setting.
- b) Trust, mutual respect, honesty, clear and caring feedback about all of it ... the good, the not so good, the things that just have to change, etc. We came to care very deeply for one another regardless of the fact that we disagreed on some issues.
- c) Openness – willing to share responsibilities – trust.
- d) Senior Pastor is a very healthy person – he continues to (sentence incomplete)
- e) I would never choose to work again in any church as pastor (see Barbara Brown Taylor's *Leaving Church*). I furthermore believe that when the Senior is male, the obstacles are huge for a female associate even if she has loads of experience.
- f) The Senior Pastor has to be secure enough to want the Associate to succeed. The Senior Pastor has to share power. The Associate has to be fair and transparent, never undermining the Senior to congregation members. Good communication also helps.
- g) Mutual respect and admiration for what we each do.

h) Open communication, trust in each other, senior pastor not “lording” it over associate.

14) On a scale of one to five, one being dissatisfied and five being very satisfied, how satisfied would you say you are with the ministry you do?

a) five

b) four

c) four

d) five

e) N.A.

f) four

g) five

h) four

15) On a scale of one to five, one being dissatisfied and five being very satisfied, how satisfied would you say you are with the ministry you share?

a) three

b) four

c) three

d) five

e) N.A.

f) four

g) five

h) four

16) What is the best or most fulfilling part of your role as Associate? Your work with your colleague? Your plans for you ministry?

- a) It is extremely fulfilling for me to have “jumped” into ministry a lay person (second career). I love leading worship, developing a Faith Formation program and working with the youth.
- b) I loved working with the parishioners – what a blessing, I discovered – it was to be ‘held’ as a pastor and thus invited into members’ (and those hanging around the church) lives at such core moments – life, abuse, struggles, life transitions, death and other losses, etc. Never planned to be a minister but this experience made me a better professor in theological education. Work with colleague – the joy of colleagueship.
- c) Working with people during sacred times of their lives.
- d) Developing opportunities for children and their families to experience a sense of belonging and find/grow their faith.
- e) N.A.
- f) Both my ministry with the congregation and my work with my colleague were equally satisfying.
- g) I love doing what I feel called to do and not worrying very much about such issues as the church budget or how best to conduct a capital campaign. It’s more rewarding to help people with personal issues.

- h) Positive response and feedback from children, youth and adults (still coming after being retired twenty-one years coming up on Oct. 3, 2014). One senior pastor still living and I still keep in touch – still good communication!

17) What is the most frustrating part of your role as Associate? Your work with your colleague? Your plans for you ministry?

- a) Most frustrating – the limited sense of covenant with one another as followers of Jesus that (to me) decreases the congregation's engagement with the overall church community and local neighborhood.
- b) Frustrating – not enough time, poor pay. Work – This lack of patience. He was very male in some ways while also coming to a more feminist understanding that became genuine. * His wife, upon their retirement, confided in me and thanked me saying how grateful she was that the “woman” he had to work with was me! She was reading the culture and feared greatly he could not retire soon enough and would have to learn to work with a woman colleague.
- c) Unsure of boundaries with colleague.
- d) Where I have the least amount of energy is in youth planning – that is, for their Sunday School program, mission trip and fundraising. I would love to see someone else do this work.
- e) N.A.
- f) I sometimes felt frustrated by plans for ministry taking a long time. I felt frustrated that I was not as effective as I hoped to be.

- g) Most of my frustrations are in my job as a social worker, not in my work as an associate pastor.
- h) Not feeling adequate for the job. Sometimes not agreeing with way things were done.

18) How do you and the Senior Pastor communicate? By what means? Who initiates?

- a) We communicate face to face, via email text and telephone. We each initiate as needed.
- b) Mostly face to face. We would 'stand' at the other's office door, lean on the door jam and work things out. We both could and did initiate.
- c) Email, face to face.
- d) Verbally with one another, weekly meetings, emails, calls, texts.
- e) N.A.
- f) We had offices next door to each other. Several times a day we would knock on each other's door to consult on our work: everything from sermon ideas, ideas for recruitment, frustration, etc. We also communicated by email. We each initiated.
- g) We are often in the office at the same time. We also use email and the telephone if there is an immediate need.
- h) Sharing verbally, over the phone when apart. Both of us initiated

19) Do you work together on anything? If so, what and how?

- a) Yes – we collaborate on worship planning, generally beginning with a meeting at the start of a church season followed by other meetings, emails, texts.

- b) Funerals, baptisms, planning staff meetings especially.
- c) Seasonal themes – Advent/Lent.
- d) Church retreat, occasional programs for parents.
- e) N.A.
- f) My senior pastor and I divided up projects, and then shared ideas and strategies.

There was always clear ownership, but we had a collaborative, respectful spirit.

- g) We “brainstorm” and dream of new approaches to ministry or program planning.
Then we pick a project and work it out.
- h) Working together on common goals, pastoral calling, budget, idea sharing, worship and other aspects of church life.

20) In what ways is your work with the Senior Pastor hierarchically stratified?

- a) I am not ordained . . . so there is that institutionalized church hierarchy.
- b) Yes, I’m tempted to say “totally” only because there really was never a moment when he as the male, senior pastor was not exactly that . . . however in the actual way we worked our actions often “messed” successfully with this traditional model.
- c) Little openness to new ideas.
- d) He has final say in worship details.
- e) N.A.
- f) He made final administrative decisions: pay, budget, hiring and firing. He preached three times more than I did.

- g) I am aware that she has the final say on things, but I seldom think about a hierarchy. Usually, we work on a goal and don't worry about who is boss.
- h) With one, it was quite senior pastor hierarchically.

21) In what ways is your work collaborative?

- a) I come from a health care background, working in therapy departments. THAT work was collaborative. I don't get that same sense in this ministry setting.
- b) I will be perhaps more generous than I should be and say we worked collaboratively on almost everything – however I think I was the one who in a way really made that happen by creating the space in which it could happen.
- c) Worship preparation
- d) In the area of pastoral care, in planning our winter retreat, in some decisions about adult education.
- e) N.A.
- f) I always felt my opinion was valued. I was given clear authority and ownership in my ministry areas, but he would seek out and follow my suggestions.
- g) We agree on who will do what.
- h) See #19.

22) In what ways is your work cooperative?

- a) I think that since there are areas (sentence incomplete)
- b) Ditto above (#21).
- c) Worship prep
- d) We try to inform each other of what's going on in our specific area of ministry.

- e) N.A.
- f) We cooperated in worship – always leading services together, every service, every Sunday. We switched off who preached, who prayed, etc.
- g) Sometimes we share what is going on when we have had to divide up meetings and similar tasks.
- h) Most all ways.

23) In what ways is your work autonomous?

- a) Since I am the “techie” in our church setting and have a strong “cross-generational” interest in Faith Formation, the Pastor lets me be free in following the Spirit in these areas.
- b) I felt a lot of autonomy – probably because I made a point of asking that it be so. I believe I was professionally sensitive and took proper “care” to keep him informed and to inquire about how he viewed something I was interested in doing, etc. My goal was never to get out ahead of him.
- c) Almost everything else.
- d) I often make most decisions in regards to the Christian Education/Spiritual Formation roadmap for children and youth.
- e) N.A.
- f) I started committees by myself – I had clear authority in certain programs: Visitation program, Mission efforts, and building and maintenance issues.
- g) The preaching and visiting I do is usually done alone. I am free to change worship as necessary when I preach.

h) The 3 senior pastors I served under pretty much let me do my job and often I would consult with them and/or get feedback to make sure I was on the right track.

24) To what sort of relationship would you compare your working partnership with your pastoral colleague?

- a) Feels more business-like (“gotta do this”) than pastoral/Spirit led.
- b) Professionally friendly (we were nowhere near “best friends”), open, challenging at times (in both directions – he challenged me and I challenged him). Mutual respect, gratefulness for one another’s contributions.
- c) Senior/Junior
- d) I have two pastoral colleagues. I think we all work hard at communicating with each other and we recognize that our relationships need to be healthy in order to run a healthy church. Family systems is what I compare church life to.
- e) N.A.
- f) Partnership.
- g) To that of a good friend who is also able to work with me to carry out the mission of the church.
- h) It was a shared ministry – usually fifty fifty – both taking responsibility, sharing victories and defeats.

25) Describe what makes your role feel fulfilling, successful and stable?

- a) Being in the moment with the Holy, purposefully make time to “be.”

- b) I felt supported at all times – even when a member of the congregation (who was the largest pledger/donor) wanted him to fire me – gave me stability. The respect and love from church and community members made the work fulfilling in its mutuality – for I respected and loved them as well.
- c) Work within the congregation
- d) It has been clear from the start what my job duties are. I also have a very supportive relationship with other associate and senior.
- e) N.A.
- f) I appreciated the autonomy and authority I had. I also valued having a colleague to share ideas with, create a community of support.
- g) The people! We don't always agree, but we listen to each other.
- h) Continuing feedback, sometimes from people who knew when I was working in the church, and the ongoing friendships.

26) What factors are most important when considering how long to stay in this position?

How long did you stay in this position? Why did you leave?

- a) I am so “into” moving with the Spirit as God opens paths in my ministry. This is a wonderful place for me now and I have no thought on “where” I’ll be called in the future.
- b) I stayed until right near the end of my doctoral studies program. I could have stayed another six months perhaps, however the senior pastor retired and I knew what would happen to my workload – even if they hired an Interim Senior Pastor.
- c) Seven years. Retirement of Senior.

- d) Being able to create new/different opportunities.
- e) N.A.
- f) I could not have had a better experience as an Associate. I stayed nine years and only left when the Senior Pastor retired.
- g) I have no immediate plans to leave; but I am open to other opportunities to serve.
- h) Happiness in the job, challenging, and doing the best I thought I was capable of, plus agreement and happiness of my wife and children. 27 years. Retirement.

27) What advice would you offer someone considering a call to associate ministry?

- a) N.A.
- b) Know yourself. Do you like/want/enjoy being “in charge” with the sign on your desk: “The buck stops here.” If you do – you can also be an Associate for a while – it is a wonderful way to gain experience if the Senior Pastor is good and what she/he does and is collegial. But if you love just being part of a team, pulling your load, helping others pull theirs, believing that two or three can be a whole lot more than merely two or three maybe – if there are quality staff members there – that could really be the place for you to live out your dream of being in ministry . . . and not trying to move up but just make a difference and enjoy doing so!
- c) Make sure you have a good understanding and relationship with the Sr.
- d) Have a clear focus in that ministry.
- e) N.A.

- f) Choose your colleague wisely. Insist on a clear job description. Demand spheres of influence where you have autonomy and authority. Think of your job as collaborative to the Senior, work on your relationship.
- g) Be open to what God wants you to do. Take care of yourself. (Not everyone can work essentially as a volunteer.) Choose a situation that excites you.
- h) Make sure you resonate with the senior pastor and the church staff. Being confident in yourself to do the job/the work you're called to do. Felt called by God to do this ministry.

28) Does the entire staff have a shared vision of ministry? If so, how was that achieved or communicated?

- a) I think a relational, cross-generational vision is beginning to grow through the movement of the Spirit, dialogue, and lay leadership.
- b) I think we were fortunate -- we had a fairly strong team – an excellent Director of Christian Ed., music director, etc. parish called (retired clergy person) but I think mostly the model was “silo” except for Senior and myself. Everyone else sort of did their “job.”
- c) No.
- d) Yes, we talk about this at our day retreats and in staff meetings and in the Leadership Team Meetings.
- e) N.A.
- f) Our vision of ministry was never clearly articulated.
- g) In general we have a shared vision, but our functions are different.

h) Yes, we did. Through verbal sharing, mutual understanding, working for and toward the growth, work and witness of [the church]. In an ideal church world, I think both senior and associate pastors would/should have similar goals arrived at through conversation, communicating, prayer, consultation and understanding with church council, etc. Yearly or semi-yearly evaluation sessions with search committee and/or cabinet/leadership council, etc. was/is very helpful.

29) On a scale of one to five, one being completely collaborative, and five being entirely autonomous, how would you rank your experience as an Associate?

a) four

b) four

c) two

d) 3.5

e) N.A.

f) three

g) three

h) three

30) And where would it be ideally?

a) five

b) four – I think this about right when the team has a well-defined leader.

c) five

d) 3.5 – I think this works well right where it is.

e) N.A.

f) three

g) three

h) three

OPTIONAL:

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Email address _____

Addendum

Several pastors wrote and told longer stories that were compiled and analyzed as well. All of them yielded some very strong themes: being a woman associate pastor is a challenge, having a clear job description and good boundaries are critical, the senior pastor has a lot to do with how fulfilling and stable one's job is, how the senior conveys the associate's authority to the congregation contributes significantly to how they view her, and finally, being solely responsible for an area of work is just as important as having a collaborative spirit and a shared vision for ministry.

One man responded both from his perspective as a former associate pastor and as an Associate Conference Minister, and conveyed several ideas unique to his perspective, and underscored other common themes. First, the congregation needs to be plainly taught what the associate's job description will entail, and how that new person will function.

The congregation needs to see authority given and shared in worship leadership and other

public displays. The congregation needs to see the senior pastor extend authority and respect to the associate, somewhat like an endorsement, to strengthen the congregation's trust in the associate. The associate needs to assertively advocate for what she wants to do and how she wants to share duties, with a mediator if necessary.

Summary of Learning from Associate Surveys

The respondents included eight people who are serving or have served as associate pastors. Seven of them are women, and one is a man. The man served as an associate for twenty-seven years. The average tenure of the other seven respondents is 6.5 years.

The variables include levels of stability and fulfillment. Two of the questions addressed stability: how long did you stay and why did you leave. All but one respondent stayed at least the average length of an associate tenure (three to four years). Reasons for leaving among half the respondents clustered around the retirement of the senior pastor, or retirement of the associate, indicating satisfaction with the position. The other half of the respondents either had not left a position or did not answer. However, in the addendum, one associate indicated she should have left sooner due to health deterioration and the combination of working full-time for part-time pay.

The other questions all came at the variable of fulfillment from different directions. Of the eight associates who submitted responses, two respondents stated that their goal was to become an associate pastor. Not one initially set out to become a senior pastor. In fact, two people specifically said they did not want to be the senior pastor. One said, "I knew I did not want the senior position. I had seen too many seniors at [church]

leave that position beaten and depressed. It seemed to be a joy-killer.” Other goals included following the Spirit, teaching as professor of theology, being open to calls, being in ministry, and being part of a staff.

Job descriptions varied in specificity. Five people reported that their job description had been clearly defined; two replied that it was not clear and one did not answer. The two that were not clear were from the 1980s and 1990s. One said, “Nothing was clear, but together we came to an agreement.” Another said, “What the church wanted seemed to be ‘another body.’ I do remember …being surprised that some tasks and expectations were added without my knowledge.” A third said, “Job description was clear, but wasn’t necessarily accurate.” Negotiability was part of half the respondents’ hiring process. One reported, “Not negotiable – accept the ‘as otherwise directed.’” Another replied, “Over time my duties evolved to reflect the gifts I brought to the church. And another said, “The position is one the senior pastor and I created.”

Responsibilities varied somewhat but there were some commonalities. Six out of eight respondents did pastoral care and hospital visits. Five preached either once a month or “occasionally.” The work of three included Sunday school and youth. One associate summed it up accurately, “I was the HEART of the ministry while the senior was the HEAD.”

Unique gifts that associates reported bringing and using include: technology, social media, administration, pastoral care, children and youth ministry, Master of Social Work degree, writing a historical column for the newsletter, and adult education. One said, “I was encouraged to do what I did best!” Another reflected the opposite situation, saying, “What I didn’t know when I began was that he would leave town each summer

from Memorial Day to Labor Day and I would become the Senior Pastor – and do everything. Oh – did I say I was half-time?!?!! And paid for half time?!?! And a full time PhD student?!”

The relationship with the senior pastor has a significant impact on the associate's ministry. One said, “I was generously welcomed by the senior pastor. He encouraged and appreciated my colleagueship and involvement in just about everything.” Another simply said, “I was constrained by the senior minister.” Despite these varying influences, six out of eight associates reported being happy with their job description and duties.

In general, senior pastors were reported as doing capable preaching and administration, with seven out of eight indicating so. Similarly, six out of eight associates reported excellent skills in areas of pastoral care, Christian education, and youth.

Five out of seven respondents replied that the senior and associate had differentiated, separate duties. One of the others indicated, “Duties were not defined, could have been more separation to cover more ground.”

Half the respondents reported that the senior pastor did most of the weddings and funerals. In one other case, the associate did far more, because the “senior did not want to do them.” One associate said, “We took turns.” Another said, “We divided them equally.” Finally, one indicated that the service was officiated by the one who was asked.

A committee made up of congregational members of one kind or another decided four of the associates' compensation packages. The senior pastor created two packages, a committee staffed by the senior pastor formed one, and one was created but the author was never discussed or revealed.

Continuing education was offered to 100% of associates, and they all reported that they took advantage of it. Six out of eight associates did continuing education work in pastoral care or Christian education. One did a PhD, and one travelled to Iona.

Half the staffs did intentional work on growing staff relationships. The ones who did all reported that it was very effective. One described the journey saying, “Our church staff is fabulous now. They deeply respect one another and the gifts that are brought to the church. But we have been through a lot of grief and hard work. My grandchildren are being raised in a church that is fun, inclusive, warm, and theologically spot-on.” Another said, “We spend time sharing more of our personal journeys which makes us feel more connected.”

The associates had significant responses about what characteristics are most helpful in a successful senior/associate relationship. One reflected the challenges in the situation by saying, “I believe that when the senior is male, the obstacles are huge for a female associate even if she has loads of experience.” Another said the characteristics that are helpful are, “open communication, trust in each other, senior pastor not ‘lording it over’ associate.” Other qualities named include collaboration, trust, mutual respect, honesty, clear and caring feedback about it all, openness, willing to share responsibilities, trust, mutual respect and admiration for what we do. One respondent said, “The senior pastor has to be secure enough to want the associate to succeed. The senior pastor has to share power. The associate has to be fair and transparent, never undermining the senior to congregation members.” The team has to be able to trust and respect each other, but the senior must possess and extend the graciousness to allow the associate growth and success.

At this point, contributor “e” stops answering questions, but offers these thoughts in conclusion:

I made a promise to myself when the last pastor was called that I would do all I could to make his ministry whole and successful. So I would never criticize him to the laity or staff. As you know, [the church] is a tough place to be.

What I should have done was quit earlier than I did. During year five, I suffered a cardiac arrest. With that event, the church gave me three months of medical leave with pay. When I returned, I knew that I couldn’t or shouldn’t stay long. I stayed just long enough to get the sabbatical to Iona plus one year extra. Still finding myself working full time with half time salary, I threw in the “stole.”

Associates reported being 88% satisfied with the ministry that they do, and 80% satisfied with the ministry that they share with their colleague.

Seven out of seven respondents said that some means of working with the congregation was the most fulfilling part of their role. Three out of seven mentioned work with their colleague as being fulfilling.

The frustrations associates face varied somewhat. Only one specifically mentioned the senior pastor as a primary source of frustration.

He was very male in some ways while also coming to a more feminist understanding that became genuine. His wife, upon their retirement, confided in me and thanked me saying how grateful she was that the “woman” he had to work with was me! She was reading the culture and feared greatly he could not retire soon enough and would have to learn to work with a woman colleague.

Other associates cited frustrations including a limited sense of covenant, not enough time, poor pay, being unsure of boundaries with a colleague, ministry taking a long time, not agreeing with the way things were done, and feeling ineffective or inadequate.

All respondents reported face-to-face verbal communication, whether at weekly meetings, daily exchanges in nearby offices, or learning on the other’s door jam. Other

methods of communication include phone, email, and text. Both seniors and associates initiate communication when needed.

Collaboration takes place in concrete ways in worship planning, funerals, baptisms, planning, developing season themes, a church retreat, pastoral calling, budget, and also in conceptual ways like sharing ideas and strategies, dreaming new approaches to ministry, and developing common goals. Each ministerial situation had unique ways of collaborating. One associate said, “I will be perhaps more generous than I should be and say we worked collaboratively on almost everything – however I think I was the one who in a way really made that happen by creating the space in which it could happen.” Another said, “I always felt my opinion was valued. I was given clear authority and ownership in my ministry areas, but he would seek out and follow my suggestions.”

Hierarchy is evident in the stratification of ordained over not ordained, in male senior over female associate and in where the buck really stops. “There was never a moment when he as the male, senior pastor was not exactly that, however in the actually way we worked our actions often “messed” successfully with this traditional model.” Others said the senior pastor had final say in worship planning, in acceptance or rejection of new ideas, and in pay, budget, hiring and firing. One whose senior pastor is a woman said, “I am aware that she has the final say on things, but I seldom think about a hierarchy. Usually, we work on a goal and don’t worry about who is boss.”

Autonomy was established in specific areas of associates’ work: technology and social media, Christian education, spiritual formation, visitation, mission, and in one other field unique to one situation: building and maintenance issues. This committee was started and chaired by the female associate.

The senior/associate working relationship was described as business relationships, professionally friendly, senior/junior, family systems, a partnership, a shared ministry, and in the case of a woman senior, the associate compared their working relationship “to that of a good friend who is also able to work with me to carry out the mission of the church.”

Things that makes the associate role feel fulfilling included time to be with the Holy, being supported at all times, respect and love from the congregation, working in the congregation, autonomy and authority, having a colleague with whom one could share ideas, and getting positive feedback.

Five out of eight associates left their positions upon the retirement of the senior pastor or their own retirement. Two others said they would stay until the Spirit calls them elsewhere, and another would stay as long as she is able to create new and different opportunities.

The advice the associates had for others considering a similar call was excellent. Three stressed vetting the senior pastor and making sure there is the potential for a good relationship with that person. Two emphasized discerning faithfulness to God’s call and doing what God wants you to do. Two associates offered self-knowledge and care as critical pieces of the puzzle. One got specific: “Insist on a clear job description. Demand spheres of influence where you have autonomy and authority. Think of your job as collaborative to the senior, and work on that relationship.”

On a scale of one to five, with one representing collaboration and five representing autonomy, associates’ average experience ranked as 3.2, slightly more

autonomous than collaborative. They would rank an ideal situation at 3.8 on the same scale, indicating a desire for more autonomy than collaboration.

In summation, the associates survey revealed the following important points:

- Let the associate be faithful to God's call to ministry.
- Have a clear job description, reflecting the associate's gifts and skills. Include future review and feedback, and leave room for growth and evolution of duties.
- Be aware of the duties associates often perform simply out of tradition: pastoral care, Sunday school or Christian education, and Youth Group, and make sure there is at least some work specific to the associate's gifts and skills, for which they are primarily responsible.
- Give the associate authority over spheres of influence that are separate from the senior pastor's ministry.
- Decide how weddings, funerals, baptisms and communion officiating duties will be shared and performed. Encourage participation by both pastors to be proportionate to their workload.
- Engage in intentional staff building and good communication. Employ outside assistance if necessary.
- Provide continuing education that will support and enrich the associate, not just her duties at church.

In short, the associate and senior may function as partners in ministry even if one is full time and the other part time. A collaborative spirit and shared vision for ministry should be the base off which they function. However, having autonomy and authority are the pieces that make being an associate pastor fulfilling and stable. It takes a very secure

senior pastor to empower the associate pastor to succeed. These ideas, combined with the responses from the senior pastors' surveys, formed the foundation for the focus group sessions.

Senior Pastor Survey and Responses

The senior pastor respondents were as follows:

1. Female retired pastor who served both as solo and with an associate.
2. Male active pastor who served with one full-time associate and now serves with two part-time associates.
3. Male active pastor who serves with one associate.
4. Male retired pastor who served with a series of seven associates
5. Female retired pastor who was a mentor and colleague to one associate.
6. Male active pastor who served with a series of students and one ecumenical associate.

The survey and the responses received are as follows:

1) How long did you serve as a senior/solo pastor?

- a) eleven years
- b) sixteen years and counting
- c) one year, four months
- d) thirty-nine years
- e) fifteen years
- f) thirty-two years

2) How long did you serve with an associate pastor?

- a) two years
 - b) seven years with one; currently with two who have been here five years and eight years
 - c) one year, four months
 - d) twenty-six years
 - e) Never had an associate. I did have an “assistant” who I mentored as an associate – three years
 - f) Twenty-three years, off and on; approximately five of those years were with an ordained associate; the rest have been with a seminary student. Since the majority of my relationships have been with students, my answers that follow are not typical of senior/associate relationships, for my colleagues have not all been “formed ministers.” (I am still in formation, too, but you get my meaning.)
- 3) Were you ever an associate pastor?
- a) No, but I was an Associate Conference Minister for six years.
 - b) Yes
 - c) Yes – eight years
 - d) No, I never served as an associate pastor
 - e) Yes. 1.5 years
 - f) No
- 4) Was your original goal to be an associate pastor, senior pastor or something else?
- a) I don’t think I had a preference.

- b) Senior
- c) No, goal was to be a pastor – in whatever form
- d) My original goal was to be a solo pastor in a medium-sized congregation.
- e) I had no idea when I entered seminary. I only knew I was called to “something.”

It became clear, however, that my gifts were better placed in a senior position.

- f) My original goal was to serve as a solo pastor of a congregation; I grew into senior pastor work.

- 5) How was the job description for the associate created? Was it negotiable?
 - a) The job description was negotiated between my associate and me, depending on the needs of the congregation and my needs and me.
 - b) After our full-time associate left, we split the job in two to get pastors who were passionate about a more focused job. Both job descriptions have evolved and one has increased in time.
 - c) Not sure – yes.
 - d) An associate pastor search committee was created, and their first task was to create an AP job description. The committee used job description from other congregations similar to the one I was serving; interviews were held with practicing associate pastors from similar congregations. Association staff members were consulted, and a couple of articles written by APs were read and discussed. Some material provided by the Alban Institute was read. The committee and I discussed at length the similarities and differences between our congregation and those about which we read. Over a period of about six months,

we drafted a job description that was given to the Church Council for review and revision. With little revision, the job description was accepted and used as the basis for the committee's search. It was agreed from the very start of the process that the job description would be negotiable, because it was understood and accepted that each candidate would bring his/her own unique style and gifts, which would need to be honored in any description of the work to be done. We also agreed that the description would be reviewed and discussed with the person called at six month, then annual reviews. The job description included work that would be understood as that of a "generalist" pastor, with certain areas of specialization, such as youth ministry, oversight/guidance of Christian education (particularly for confirmation age and older youth) and innovation in worship.

- e) Again, this was an "assistant" not an associate who was fresh out of seminary and directed my way by our Committee on Preparation for Ministry. Initially, he was hired to be a youth director. Once he had that underway, I began to delegate pastoral responsibilities to him so he would learn and I could critique...that included preaching, pastoral calls, and a funeral.
 - f) The basic framework of a job description was conceived prior to interviewing candidates, but the details of the job description were developed in full in conversation with the candidate selected.
- 6) What are your areas of responsibility? How were they determined?
- a) As Senior Pastor I was primarily responsible for preaching, pastoral care, and administration. Because I had experience in Christian Education, I also choose to

develop some adult education programs and worked with our CE person on the church school program.

- b) General ministry, worship, outreach, pastoral care
- c) Worship, administration, mission, outreach. Specifics are determined with the associate.
- d) My areas of responsibility were primarily determined by the congregation's tradition with senior pastors. It was pretty standard stuff for the senior pastor of a fairly large, thriving Congregation: worship preparation and leadership, preaching, funerals, weddings, pastoral care and counseling, administrative oversight and "head of staff" responsibilities, fiscal oversight, building maintenance oversight, etc., etc. I was also expected to be a presence in the community, providing a kind of public face for the churches I served, as well as being on the alert for new opportunities for the congregation to be involved in' mission and ministry beyond the church doors. All of this was determined by work done by the Church Council and the search committee, after serious consultation with the members of the congregation over an extended period of time.
- e) I am "honorably retired" now. As senior (solo) pastor in several troubled churches, my responsibilities were typical of a solo pastor but I also had to be deliberate about helping each of these churches work through their difficulties so that they could become healthy churches...or, at least, be headed that way by the time another pastor was called (unfortunately, I couldn't pick my successors).

- f) My main areas of responsibility take in worship planning, preaching, pastoral care, and the administrative work of staffing church committees and supervising our other staff. These were negotiated with the search committee that called me to this position and in conjunction with the Church Council through the years.
- 7) Where does your job description especially reflect your gifts? How did that come about?
- a) See above. The church I served trusted me to design my job description.
 - b) I think my gifts are reflected in the way I go about my tasks. There is frequent discussion and adjustment.
 - c) In conversation with associate. Some are expectations of the congregation.
 - d) I was called because my gifts seemed to match those desired by the congregation and captured in the written job description. I suppose that my gifts for worship leadership, preaching, pastoral care and some administrative acumen matched the job description most closely.
 - e) I have a strange background in journalism (news reporting), public relations, and politics. This minister thing was a second career for me. Working through difficult situations was inherent in the job I had as press secretary to a governor and dealing with a hostile news media (and hostile co-workers). But my writing skills were honed in all those jobs and aided me in pounding out a sermon every week that was clear, authentic, understandable, and life applicable. I also think sitting in those pews for forty-three years before I was ordained helped me to know a good sermon when I heard/wrote it.

- f) My gifts for ministry are in the areas of teaching, preaching, and writing. These were the gifts I thought I offered and which were identified in me when I was called to this pastorate.
- 8) Describe the similarities and differences in skill sets that you and the associate pastor possess.
- a) Actually we had fairly similar skill sets just different temperaments that complimented each other. We both enjoyed working with committees, planning and leading worship. He had skills in computer/networking that I did not have and I enjoyed working with youth and planning mission projects.
 - b) The primary difference is I'm able and willing to lead from a broader vision. Both associates are more detailed which serves their jobs well.
 - c) I'm more administrative, but also work more in areas of visioning. Big picture stuff.
 - d) I have served with seven associate pastors, so I will base my response here on my experience with the associate with whom I served before my retirement. My skill sets included those referenced in Question 4 above, having been the basis of my ministry for thirty-five years. My associate shared many of the same skills that were important to me, as well as bringing her own unique skills to the pastoral office. For example, she was an accomplished musician, who understood the importance of music in worship and other settings. Her relative youth gave her a high level of energy, which she brought to every dimension of her pastoral work. She had a knack for articulating fresh ideas in and for pastoral ministry. Her

unique perspectives, grounded in her relative youth, her very being as a woman, wife and mother, her prior experiences in ministry, and later, her perspectives as a single mother – all these worked together to give her a set of skills for ministry that were distinctly different from mine – AND were greatly appreciated within the life of the church.

- e) Again, an “assistant.” He was excellent with the youth. But he wasn’t good with little children. Ironically, I was excellent with the little ones but I never had one of my own. But I have to end the comparisons there because he was such a newbie that everything he did, he pretty much learned from me.
- f) This answer will focus on my current lay associate, who is also a seminary student pursuing ordination in the United Church of Christ. Her work here began before she made the determination to enter seminary, but this church’s history as a teaching church led her to apply here in the first place. That is to say, she came here because she wanted to develop gifts in and knowledge of pastoral ministry. The particular gifts – distinct from mine – the lay associate brought and continues to utilize with excellence include youth work, a background in social work, providing sensitive pastoral care, and skills in tactile forms of Christian education.

9) Is there a sense that you both did everything or did you have separate duties?

- a) Yes.
- b) We share a ministry but with some overlapping responsibilities and some separate. We talk through most things.
- c) Both are general ministry duties across the board.

- d) While we both shared in a great many of the dimensions of pastoral ministry, we did have separate responsibilities. The duties assigned to the associate included, but were not limited to, youth ministry and education, Christian education oversight, confirmation education, and innovation in worship (usually in consultation with me; this is how I remember our work together – as partners in pastoral ministry, respected colleagues working as collaboratively as we were able, and being in frequent consultation with one another on most anything that impacted the life of the congregation).
- e) Yes. We did everything. There were committees and I made them come to their own decisions. But in terms of pastoral duties, I/we did everything.
- f) With our former ordained associate, an Ecumenical Associate Pastor, it was by design that she and I shared in everything, though the congregation's desire and her language barriers made it such that I remained the lead (though not only) preacher. With our current lay associate, there is more division of labor, though much is shared. She takes the lead with regard to youth work; we both share in the leadership of worship; and we share in the staffing of many (but not all) church committees. We share, too, in pastoral care (hospital and nursing home work, counseling, etc.). By her choice, she has helped with funerals but has not taken a sole or lead role in any funeral (save one) or marriage ceremonies. It should be pointed out that, since many of the associatesassistants who have worked with me have been students, many of their duties have been dictated by their learning contracts associated with their field education requirements. My practice has been to open all of ministry to them.

10) Who did weddings? Funerals? Baptisms? How was that determined?

- a) Mostly I did these unless I was away or he had a particular relationship with the person(s).
- b) We share them based on relationships with those involved.
- c) Both. Most often on schedule/availability while trying to keep a balance.
- d) As I recall, weddings were usually officiated at by whoever of us was asked to do so. However, the question would often be asked of the couple whether they would like both of us to participate. The officiant at some weddings was determined by the availability of the pastor on the date the couple requested. The associate and I shared in most funerals and baptisms, because we understood that these life-cycle events are enormously important to families, and the participation of both pastors confirmed the importance of the occasion; it also provided opportunity for the associate's role in pastoral care and ministry to be honored as fully as that of the "senior" pastor. The intent was to lessen the congregation's innate bias toward seeing the older, male "senior" pastor as the REAL pastor, with the associate as a sort of "little helper," to quote a parishioner when describing the role of one of the associates with whom I served.
- e) I worked him into one funeral before he left for his own church. He assisted me with baptisms and communion but he wasn't allowed to do those yet nor was he legal to do weddings. Interestingly, there were people in the congregation who did not think he should be allowed to stand with me or say anything, even prayers, during communion, but that was just water off a duck's back to me.

f) Oops. I see I anticipated this in #7. This work has fallen to me but has not been “hogged” by me. It has fallen to me by nature of the kind of associate relationships we have had at this church. The Ecumenical Associate was designed to be shared; our pastor from Germany wanted to be, and was, fully involved, but did not want to take the lead. We each did meditations at the funerals we shared. Our current lay associate, coming in as a layperson and as a student, has not felt she has been ready to lead in these areas. Still, she participates regularly in the liturgical leadership at Baptism as well as Communion.

11) Who decided what each compensation package would include?

- a) The Church Council
- b) Leadership Team
- c) Church Council
- d) Compensation packages were determined by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the office administrator, reviewed by the Church Council, and voted on by the Congregation. The compensation packages were almost identical in terms of what was included: salary, housing allowance, car and book allowances, pension payments, vacation time, continuing education time and compensation, etc. While the dollar amounts varied because of experience and levels of administrative responsibility, I ALWAYS used whatever authority or influence I was given to make sure that the dollar differences diminished from year to year, as the associate grew into his/her job, gained experience, demonstrated unique

gifts, excelled in fulfilling responsibilities, etc. Generally speaking, the lay leadership shared my guidance and perspective.

- e) This isn't really applicable to our situation, but all salary packages were determined by the Session, the church governing body. In the case of the pastor, it was a contract agreed upon by the Session, the pastor, and the Committee on Ministry (Presbytery). I had to fight for every penny I got.
- f) The Church Council

12) Was Continuing Education offered? Did you take it? What did you do?

- a) Yes and yes. I went to a variety of workshops and also used my fund for books.
- b) Yes and yes.
- c) Yes and yes. Preaching conferences, leadership conferences, retreats.
- d) Yes. Yes. Two extended sabbaticals, as well as twice-yearly seminars, conferences and study opportunities that became available and were relevant to my needs and the setting in which I was serving. The associate was offered the same time off and compensation as I received.
- e) The Presbytery required continuing education. Two weeks each year and, yes, I took all of it. I often attended the "Festival of Homiletics" and/or a weeklong retreat at Washington Island sponsored by the Wisconsin Council of Churches. I would add in local and less expensive workshops to the mix. First Methodist and Bethel Lutheran, downtown Madison, had some good ones.

f) Yes, continuing education is offered. My general practice is to do self-designed study projects, some of which have involved travel. Most recently, I spent some time in Edinburgh reviewing the papers of James S. Stewart at New College.

13) Did the staff do any intentional work on establishing, maintaining or growing staff relationships? Was it effective?

- a) No we didn't do intentional work but the staff worked well together intuitively.
- b) We are committed to that as a team. On occasion we've sought outside assistance. It is important and a priority.
- c) Yes – I think so.
- d) When an associate was first called, the existing staff created opportunities for the team to gather to focus specifically on our working and personal relationships, usually in the form of a retreat led by a leader skilled in staff development. The staff also met weekly, almost without exception (we abbreviated our staff meeting on the morning of 9/11, after we had processed some of what we were feeling and thinking). These meetings included time for focusing on our working relationship with one another, as well as time for prayer. At least every other year we would hold a staff retreat, again led by a leader skilled in enabling staff to work well together, honoring one another's gifts, personal needs, frustrations, dissatisfactions, etc. In my (perhaps jaundiced) judgment, these were very effective in enabling us to work together in our mutual service within the life of the church, and beyond.

- e) I required monthly meetings of staff including clerical, youth ministry, music, and pastoral. Yes, these were effective and necessary. We knew we had each other's backs, an imperative in church work. When I worked as an associate, one senior pastor never met with us as a group (it would have been beneath him), and the right hand never knew what the left hand was doing. But he was in charge so it didn't make any difference to him. In another situation, the senior required weekly meetings of staff for general purposes, weekly meetings of the worship team for planning, and weekly meetings of the pastoral care people. These were both big churches. The latter one worked better in my book, but the irony is that the one with the dictator pastor (the first one) was thriving and the other one was dying. I think it had to do with location of the churches. Oh, I could go on and on.... Neither of those pastorates was healthy.
- f) The seminaries I have worked with have had required meetings or training sessions for field education supervisors. The formation of learning contracts, together with evaluations completed by the student as well as myself, have had this type of thing built into the program. The Ecumenical Associate Pastor program required open communication about roles and the nature of ministry.

14) What do you think are the most helpful characteristics of a successful and fulfilling Senior/Associate relationship?

- a) A willingness to negotiate on a day-to-day basis, mutual respect and a sense of collegiality. It is also helpful if each person feels worthy and competent so there is no competition or jealousy.

- b) Open communication, sense of shared ministry, respect – privately and publicly – for one another's gifts.
- c) Collegiality, similar perspectives theologically, humbleness, unselfishness
- d) The following:
 - common experience in the life of a reasonably healthy congregation from childhood on.
 - growing up in a “normal” family environment; i.e., with as little dysfunction present as possible.
 - common understanding of the pastoral office – its purpose, function, opportunities, responsibilities, limits and demands.
 - earnest desire on the part of each person to genuinely care about the other as a whole person, with a mutual respect and affection that can handle serious disagreement, differing perspectives, personal needs, etc.
 - shared, deep love for the people God has called us to serve, including the willingness to accept serious differences of opinion theologically, politically, economically, even on occasion, differing understandings of morality and what Jesus expects of his disciples.
 - willingness to compromise, even when it hurts and feels like the congregation is not being well served – with a mutually understood requirement to revisit the compromise if things seem to be going awry.
 - this one should have been first: an unshakable faith in Jesus Christ as Lord of the Church and Lord of our lives and our call to pastoral ministry. Without this,

nothing else matters very much. Being able to laugh uproariously about the same things also helps tremendously.

- e) One-on-one time that is unallocated or without an agenda. Collegiality needs to be developed and that isn't going to work if the senior pastor only gives it lip service. Preaching must be shared as must funerals, weddings, baptisms, communion, etc. Laughter and lots of it is essential. One senior pastor I worked with couldn't have defined collegiality, I don't think. The other thought he knew what it meant but he didn't. Collegiality takes a lot of work and intentionality. Most seniors don't want to commit to that.

- f) The following:

- A shared vision or understanding of ministry
- Trust
- Communication
- Coordination of efforts
- Mutual respect
- Unity in diversity – sufficiently different in terms of gifts/theology, yet compatible
- Public recognition and support of one another

- 15) On a scale of one to five, one being dissatisfied and five being very satisfied, how satisfied would you say you are with the ministry you did?

- a) five
- b) five

- c) FOUR*
 - d) Depends on the church. In my senior (solo) positions, I would say five. In my associate positions I would say two.
 - e) Four
- 16) On a scale of one to five, one being dissatisfied and five being very satisfied, how satisfied would you say you are with the ministry you shared?
- a) five
 - b) five
 - c) five
 - d) FOUR*
 - i) Comment on both 13 and 14: I have never managed to be “very” satisfied with any dimension of my ministry; I always felt there was more I could have/should have done
 - e) With the dictator pastor, I give it a 1. With the semi-collegial pastor, I give it a three. With me a senior and with my “assistant,” I give it a five.
 - f) Four.
- 17) What was the best or most fulfilling part of working with an associate?
- a) The sharing of ideas and the ability to complement each other’s style intuitively in worship.
 - b) Shared respect, broader array of gifts
 - c) Ability to share ideas; bounce a thought off another theological thinker

- d) Being able to share ideas, use each other as sounding boards, hear the other's perspective on the behavior, attitudes, etc. of members of the congregation, being surprised by the tremendous ideas the associate would bring to the table, hearing a new or different approach to an old or intractable problem, being able to challenge one another without losing respect and appreciation for the other, sharing a glass or two of wine at the end of a tough week, being able to rejoice and to weep together. Sharing much laughter was the oil that lubricated our work together.
- e) Again, this is an "assistant" who I treated as an associate. The best part was mentoring that resulted in solid discussions about not only his future, but mine as a pastor and the future of the church
- f) Each associate with whom I have worked has taught me much. Each associate has helped me to reflect upon church, ministry, theology, and society. Each has helped keep me fresh and energized.

18) What was the most frustrating part of working with an associate?

- a) Honestly I appreciated having an associate and don't remember any frustration.
- b) When the associate started losing interest in their actual job
- c) Moments when you are not on the same page, congregational preferences OR triangulation
- d) Not being able to convince him/her that I was right and he/she was wrong!

Watching an associate move ahead with an idea on his/her own without having carefully considered what the unintended consequences might be, or how the

initiation of a new idea might disturb the equilibrium in the congregation in unhealthy ways.

- e) He yawned too much. And he wasn't organized. In fact, he was completely disorganized. I wouldn't tolerate that in worship. I gave him some leeway in everything else because I didn't want to stifle his creativity. But the bottom line is that he lacked discipline in many areas.
- f) Until recently, the chief difficulty has been with turnover. I have enjoyed working with our current lay associate for some seven years.

19) How did you and the associate communicate? By what means?

- a) Informal and regular conversations.
- b) Staff meetings, retreats, email
- c) Conversation
- d) Almost all of our communication was in person, initiated by whoever felt the need to do so. We also used phone, email, and occasionally other trusted staff. We tried very diligently NOT to spring unexpected issues, ideas, conclusions, or opinions on each other in meetings, when in conversation with laity or other staff, etc.
- e) In person either face-to-face or phone. Sometimes an email when necessary.
- f) We have communicated well, chiefly in person. Field education situations call for scheduled meetings once a week, but we each have an open door policy to the other.

20) Did you work together on anything? If so, what and how?

- a) We worked together planning worship, developing programs, and deciding who would visit whom
- b) Many things
- c) Worship, pastoral care, Bible study, most everything
- d) We worked together on a great many things – pastoral care, worship leadership, administrative functions, stewardship, determining the content of confirmation instruction, and on and on. We were in daily conversation about those dimensions of the life of the church in which we were both involved. To the extent possible, we supported one another in whatever we were doing together or independently.
- e) We did confirmation together and we did worship together. Out of necessity, I had to be in charge but he knew his input was always welcomed. And we spent good time in conversation about the health of the church and its members.
- f) The Ecumenical Associate and I worked on more projects together. A series of midweek Lenten sermons on United Church of Christ heritage stands out. These were sermons we did in concert, almost like dialogue sermons.

21) In what ways was your work with the associate hierarchically stratified?

- a) I was a solo pastor for eight plus years and so when I had an associate I clearly was the one who made the final decisions. But, on my part, it felt like this was a mutual process.

- b) While I think I have final responsibility, it's important to me that we negotiate everything as much as possible.
- c) Senior always had final say or veto, but didn't have to do that much
- d) I suppose that in fiscal matters and in the leadership of truly major undertakings by the congregation (building or renovation projects, capital campaigns, etc.) I was expected to take a "senior pastor" role. In various meetings, I felt that I was being looked to for guidance or suggestions that could easily have been dealt with by the associate. There is a certain "built-in bias" in laity (probably based on their experience in the business/corporate world) toward deferring to the person with the most tenure, highest salary, accustomed gender, etc. that I tried to work around, with varying degrees of success.
- e) Not sure about this question. While the Session and the personnel committee thought they were in charge of him, he answered to me and he always felt he worked for me
- f) There is hierarchy in job title and job description but I like to think mutual respect and collaboration have kept the hierarchy from becoming hardened.

22) In what ways was your work collaborative or cooperative?

- a) We worked collaboratively pretty much on everything, deciding what was in the best interest of the person and/or congregation, in the planning and in the sharing of responsibilities.
- b) We share all ministries even if we aren't actually involved. We value each one's ministry as legitimate.

- c) Always. In most everything, sharing ideas, always “checking in.”
- d) I’m unclear, without turning to a dictionary, about the precise differences between these two terms, but I assume “collaborative” means working together on a project, event, program, etc. where each brings his/her insight, experience, wisdom, creativity to the table for shared discussion, exploration and final decision making. Previous answers given to preceding questions speak to this question. I will assume that “cooperative” means working independently of one another, but in such ways that each affirms, supports and enables the other’s work to thrive. In other words, work side by side but stay out of each other’s way while doing whatever can be done to help the other succeed. Again, answers to previous questions in this survey address these matters.
- e) It would be interesting to know what he would say about that. I left him to do his work but called him to accountability when I sensed he was dropping the ball due to his disorganization. One excellent example of our collaborative effort was the Maundy Thursday service. He came up with a great idea for pounding nails into a huge homemade cross carried in by a couple of the male youth group members. It was chilling in the quiet church. And the service just ended there – no more prayers or benediction. We filed out quietly, many in tears. There were other examples of his innovation too, but that one stands out for me – and repeatedly. Also, when he saw a need, he usually stepped up and filled it (in terms of assisting me). I seldom told him no. Also, I cooperated with him as he initiated new youth group programs and mission trips and I stood up for him, often in heated

situations, against individual church members who were just looking for a way to criticize him.

- f) We share in the crafting of goals, bouncing ideas off one another. We share in the evaluation of how well we are doing in reaching those goals. We anticipate meetings at which we will have a shared presence, and we discuss our best approach(es) to topics that may arise so we can put forth a united and cooperative effort. We share in volunteer recruitment. We have each promoted the other's work. We regularly share the pastoral care needs that are afoot in the congregation, helping one another toward best responses. It has been wholly cooperative. I can honestly say I have never felt undercut, and I hope the Associate can say the same.

23) In what ways was your work autonomous?

- a) When it was decided that we were in charge of worship or a project, we each took responsibility to follow through without checking in with the other unless we needed input/advise.
- b) There are many ways in which we work in our designated areas with the trust of one another.
- c) Personnel issues
- d) The most autonomous work I did was sermon preparation, preparation for leading Bible study, pastoral counseling, monitoring staff relationships, dealing with disruptive matters in the life of the congregation. Yet even in each of those "autonomous" areas, the associate and I would engage one another in

conversation, sharing of ideas and perspectives, etc. For example, some of my best preaching was preceded by intense discussions about biblical/theological dimensions of a text or a preaching setting.

- e) Because of the nature of his work, I can't say that he was ever completely autonomous, but I gave him a lot of rope. But both of us were under constant scrutiny by the session. I taught him a lot about making written monthly reports in a way that covered our butts and to which we could point when someone said, "I didn't know about that" or "who gave you permission to do that" or "why didn't you tell us about that."
- f) This isn't a term I use in this sense. From my perspective, none of my work is autonomous. It is all work done under God for the sake of the church under the oversight of the Council.

24) To what sort of relationship would you compare your working partnership with your pastoral colleague?

- a) ??
- b) trusted colleagues
- c) professional, collegial
- d) I would compare it to a healthy, solid friendship shared by two equally though differently gifted but unique individuals who value their friendship for both personal benefit and for the benefit of a calling that is larger than either of them, or both of them together.
- e) Mentor-mentee.

- f) I have often talked of the relationship as comparable to that of professors in the same department at a college or seminary. We work independently but in concert and consultation with one another toward mutually agreed upon ends.

25) Describe what makes your role feel fulfilling, successful and stable?

- a) The acceptance and mutual respect of the congregation
- b) Working as a team
- c) Congregational vitality, they see us working as a team, express appreciation.
- d) My freedom to use my gifts to their fullest, while working alongside a colleague who was enjoying the same freedom. The sense that I was carrying out the work of the pastoral office in ways that honored Christ, while being forgiven for the ways in which I failed to fulfill pastoral work in responsible fashion. I felt “successful” when my ideas and effort thrived and paid off in positive ways, AND whenever I was able to observe the same thing happening in my colleague’s ministry. It was also enormously gratifying to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that when I asked by associate to attend to some important matter, whatever it might be, it would be promptly, wisely and faithfully carried out. NOTE: go back to #12 and add in as “h)” the mutual capacity to earn, accept and exercise authentic TRUST in each other.
- e) When he was on staff with me, it felt fulfilling to be part of a real team, knowing we were praying for each other and the church, lifting one another up when our spirits sagged, keeping us accountable. He needed to leave for his own church for

his sake (and our church wouldn't pay him a minimum pastor's salary to stay) and I missed him right away. It was hard for me to put up with the crap after he left.

f) See # 15

26) What factors are most important when considering how long to stay in a position?

How long did you stay in your positions? Why did you leave?

- a) I think one should stay in a position as long as it is healthy and effective. I was in my position for eleven years and left because I was ready to retire.
- b) There are always personal reasons as well as professional ones. I was an associate for seven years and was proud of it.
- c) five, five, five, and current. Family.
- d) The decision to stay or leave has as much to do with carefully "honed" pastoral intuition as it does with specific factors. But among the factors that must be taken into consideration are: the quality of the relationship between pastor and congregation; the level of vitality in the congregation observed by the pastor and lay leadership; the pastor's sense of when he/she has done as much with his/her gifts and skills as can reasonably hope to be done in that particular setting; the extent of the "restlessness" the pastor feels with the day in – day out work of the calling. I stayed in my first church for nine years. I left primarily because I wanted to exercise in a new setting what I had learned in those nine years. I've always wondered if it might have been wiser to hang around for a few more years! I stayed in my second church for thirteen years, the last five of which I shared with a remarkably talented, mature and interesting associate who came to us fresh out of seminary. When he left after about four years, I continued as senior

pastor until another associate was called who turned out to be a complete dud. I remained through the selection of a third associate, who was certainly a person with many skills; she was also the first associate with whom I worked who was a woman. I learned a GREAT deal about many things from her! However, I experienced a major life health crisis after twelve years as the senior pastor, and felt myself in need of some serious renewal and reflection on the ways in which I was exercising pastoral ministry. I concluded that another, less isolated setting for ministry, with additional staff with whom to work, might be what the Spirit wanted me to have for the remaining years of my ministry. I served my third congregation for eighteen years, and decided to retire when I realized that my energy level was noticeably diminishing, and that my enthusiasm for pastoral work was waning in ways that would be a disservice to the congregation. Besides, I realized that there were changes confronting the church that would require the skills and abilities that only a younger pastor with experience in leading a congregation through difficult change could offer. I was also, quite frankly, exhausted mentally and spiritually by the work required to shepherd the congregation through the “open and affirming” process.

- e) From my experience in the pews, as a pastor, as a member of presbytery-wide committees as both a lay person and clergy, I have come to conclude that a pastor should only stay eight to ten years. Fresh thinking is needed in the pastorate and it's way too easy to become lackadaisical about the calling to which we are called. My positions were all temporary or interim positions, but the last one I had I stayed seven and a half years. I left that because I was dog tired of the sheer

meanness and tongue wagging of a very few church members and a leadership that failed to see the importance of standing up for and by the pastor.

- f) I have been in my current position for nearly twenty-four years. Why am I still here? God only knows! It is mostly because I have not been called away or sent away.

27) What advice would you offer someone considering a call to associate ministry?

- a) I think it would be important to have a sense of respect for the senior and to feel confident that the senior has respect for your pastoral skills and abilities and is willing to share the love of the congregation and the responsibilities with you.
- b) Be sure that you trust, understand and can work with the senior. Absolutely the most important thing.
- c) Be open, humble, team player, learn and grow. Be a faithful minister to the church.
- d) I would advise that person to carefully consider whether they would really find fulfillment in doing whatever the associate position called for. Questions I would ask? Do you have the necessary gifts, skills and interest to do what the job calls for? Are you eager to learn from a more experience colleague? Are you genuinely committed to pastoral work, regardless of the position to which you are called? Can you care for and serve people who don't appear to respect you and the work you are doing? What do you know about the character and style of the senior pastor with whom you will be working? Can you abide and thrive working day in and day out with someone with his/her personality? What do you know about the

senior's expectations of you as an associate? How does the congregation view the role of an associate, as well as the relationship between the senior and associate? Does the senior know about appropriate boundaries? Will you be able to work collegially with other staff members? To whom can you turn when the going gets really, really tough, as it inevitably will? Is your faith firmly rooted in the love of Christ for you and for the Church? Have you had solid guidance and support in discovering your most genuine motives for wanting to engage in associate ministry? What will you do if it doesn't "work out," for whatever reason? If you have close family who will be with you as you fulfill your calling as an associate, how do they feel about what you are/will be doing?

- e) Everyone has to start somewhere. I didn't start that way, but I was relegated to small rural churches because that was all that was available in my geographically bound setting. I did not like being an associate because I did not like the leadership styles of the two seniors with whom I worked. The associate position can only be successful in a couple of scenarios: 1) the associate is given complete autonomy and has specific duties assigned in advance with no expectation of anything more or 2) the senior is truly committed to being collaborative and recognizing the talents and gifts of the associate and reaffirming them regularly with additional responsibilities where appropriate. Those are two extremes and neither one presents itself very often.
- f) I suppose it would be the same advice I would offer anyone pursuing a call to ministry – keep close to God, keep a growing edge, believe in the people you are called to serve, maintain boundaries, be patient, and remember that just because

something is a good work you are not necessarily called to do it (i.e., you can't do everything and are not meant to).

28) Did the entire staff have a shared vision of ministry? If so, how was that achieved or communicated?

- a) Yes. I guess I articulated my hopes for the congregation and asked other staff how they could help make this happen in their work.
- b) Always talk about it, always evolving.
- c) Yes, through the pastors' examples
- d) Yes – the whole staff shared a common vision of ministry, and invested themselves in working to realize that vision. This was achieved by daily communication in and around the office, by carefully interviewing and selecting new staff, by being clear about expectations held by the head of staff and lay leadership, and by occasional personal and private conversations with the senior pastor and/or other appropriate persons. The fact that every staff person was expected to be present for at least a portion of every weekly staff meeting went a long way to clarifying and pursuing the shared vision for ministry.
- e) When I had my assistant, I would say, yes, the entire staff signed on and we communicated easily one-on-one and in staff meetings. I had considerable difficulties with church secretaries mainly because of one who was a church member and thought it was her responsibility to run the church and only filter some information on to me. She handed me postage stamps in the same manner. Ick. It was awful. Took me five years to get rid of her.

- f) See # 12. Shared, but not exactly the same. We have separate ministries ~~within~~ a common ministry.

29) On a scale of one to five, one being completely collaborative, and five being entirely autonomous, how would you rank your experience as a senior pastor?

- a) four
- b) five
- c) five
- d) TWO - From time to time, the buck had to stop somewhere, and it almost always stopped with me, whether or not that was my preference. It came with the territory, so to speak.
- e) three
- f) three

30) And where would it be ideally?

- a) four
- b) left blank
- c) five
- d) ONE: after the realm of God has come in all its glory.
- e) two: Somebody has to be in charge.
- f) I would paraphrase Matthew 13:52 to read, "Therefore the senior/associate trained for ministry knows how to take out of the treasure what is collaborative and what is autonomous." There cannot be a measure of exactness, for I think that kind of

exactness would be like a San Andreas Fault potentially damaging to a healthy, shared ministry that exists for the sake of the church.

Addendum

One respondent had additional comments that went beyond the scope of the survey. This person proposed that a successful senior/associate relationship really depends on chemistry; the key is in the relationship. They need to build a level of trust and honesty that they can count on. It may be that the division of duties is almost irrelevant, he proposed, because in the right relationship, tasks can always be worked out. A good team can always get around a conflict in assignments if they want to, as long as there is honesty and a willingness to be candid with each other. Being truthful includes not manipulating each other, the situation or the truth, but instead being open, not threatened and abiding by a structure that allows for checking in on that. This is a difficult task for clergy, most of who are trained to work alone, keep confidences, and guard their privacy strictly as a means of self-protection. But moving toward this kind of openness is one thing that can help pastoral colleagues collaborate and share the work.

At the same time, there is value in the associate having a specialty, investing in continuing education to strengthen their skills and gaining a public endorsement from the senior pastor. Authority is difficult to get, and many congregations fall back on the corporate business model of listening primarily to the CEO. The associate would be wise to define a specific area of expertise and claim that before the congregation.

Collaboration can have a down side too. When colleagues work completely in tandem, the pace slows, communication must increase, and people can become confused

as to who to talk to. The pastoral answer becomes, "I'll have to get back to you about that," as the colleague is consulted. Collaboration at any degree depends on the temperament and relationship of the pastors.

Another respondent added that churches of different sizes need different things in an associate, and sometimes this is financially driven. A growing church that is used to having a solo pastor may scrape together enough to get a part time associate started, while a larger church may have resource to hire as many associates or specialists as they need. Trinity UCC in Chicago currently has a staff of ten pastors including eight associates in different areas of specialty. Old South Church in Boston also has ten pastors in various fields of specialization. Not every church can afford to have slots to fill and hire specialists. Most mainline churches need a basic generalist who can bring their own specific skills to the church and define the role according to their gifts and interests.

Summary of Learning From Senior Pastor Surveys

One common theme from senior pastors was an emphasis on the need for communication and collegiality. They valued the sharing of ideas and conversation even more than the sharing of duties. Another important characteristic for pastors to share is mutual respect. Several pastors mentioned faithfulness as a key ingredient to successful pastorates, however it was conceded that a poor attitude in the senior pastor might contribute to great job dissatisfaction in even the most faithful associate. At several points in the consideration of cooperation, collaboration and hierarchy, seniors mentioned pastors' service to God, the authority of the church council, the obligation to the congregation itself, and the wider body of colleagues that all serve as a counterbalance to

the alienation and isolation so prevalent in ministry. It is helpful to remember that regardless of title, duties, tenure, gender, age, or even experience, all pastors answer a higher call to God in their ministerial service.

That said, the duties reflected tradition for the most part. Seniors' most commonly held duties include leading worship, preaching, administration and pastoral care. The seniors agreed that associates brought specific and distinct gifts to their ministries, however the most commonly named duties for associates included youth, pastoral care, Christian education and confirmation. It was not apparent that knowledge of feminist theology had any bearing on the situation.

This group of respondents reported that weddings and funerals were done by the pastor who received the request to serve. In other words, the congregation members got to choose who officiated. While it is understandable that this would happen, this is the kind of situation where the senior can graciously extend authority to the associate. Congregants will always have a reason they are connected to one pastor or another. In fact, all members are connected to both pastors in many ways. Some intentional sharing and a public endorsement can increase the associate's authority in front of the congregation.

One senior pastor mentions the fast turnover of associates as problematic. He says a long associate pastorate is seven years. One of the more collaborative seniors has worked with associates for five and eight years of tenure, but still they have served for only half the tenure of the senior, who has served for sixteen years.

Overall the seniors express gratitude for associates for collegiality and sharing the work. They try to share as much as seems reasonable without giving up the pulpit or actual control: the buck stops with the senior pastor, regardless of who does the work.

Congregational Focus Group Pre-Test, Classes, and Post-Test Results

The focus group was scheduled to meet for six Wednesday evenings at the church: October 8, 15, 22, 29, and November 5 and 12. The congregation was invited, and they self-selected their participation. Sixteen people participated including twelve women and four men. The ages of the participants ranged from fifty to eighty years old. The moderator and the treasurer attended, as well as two members of the Pastoral Relations Committee. One woman is a retired pastor. The others included the leaders of the adult education forum, the leader of the lay ministry team, the secretary of the council, the leader of the Stephen Ministry team, another council member, the organizer of the church's major fundraisers, and three others who have served in various capacities.

Session One

The first session began with a greeting, welcome, and thanks for participating, as well as a prayer. Then the pre-test was distributed, taken, and received, over a time period of about fifteen minutes. The class focused on the importance of stability in the life of the pastors, pastors' families, and congregation. Discussion centered on the benefits and drawbacks to pastoral changes. The group remembered various changes in staff that had occurred in the last forty years, and the conditions that surrounded each change. The participants offered thoughts on why pastors leave and why they decide to stay.

One participant brought up the importance of strong lay leadership during times of change. Another raised the issues of appropriate pastoral support being made available through a Pastoral Relations Committee. (In the researcher's denomination, this is a body of congregation members who serve as a sounding board for the pastor, communication facilitators between pastor and congregation, and support for the pastor.) Unfortunately, this conversation digressed into an argument about how those people are selected and what function they serve. Even talking about pastoral changes made the group anxious enough to change the subject of the conversation and bicker over protocol.

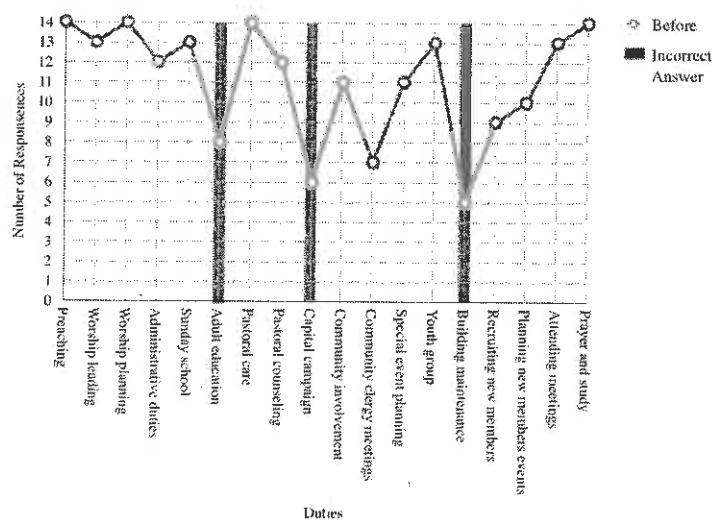
Subsequent classes were planned in response to the pre-test answers the respondents had offered. The Pre/Post Test can be seen in Appendix C. Below are the compiled results from the pretest.

Pre-Test

- 1) Only one out of fourteen respondents knew how many hours a week the associate is contracted to work, which is twenty-five. Two others got close but were still off. Five thought she was half time, five thought she was full time, and one thought she worked ten to fifteen hours a week.

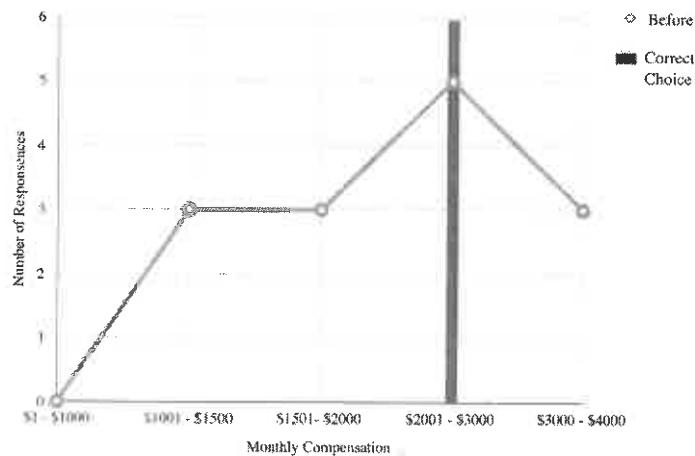
2) What are the Associate Pastor's duties and areas of service?

What are the Associate Pastor's duties and areas of service?



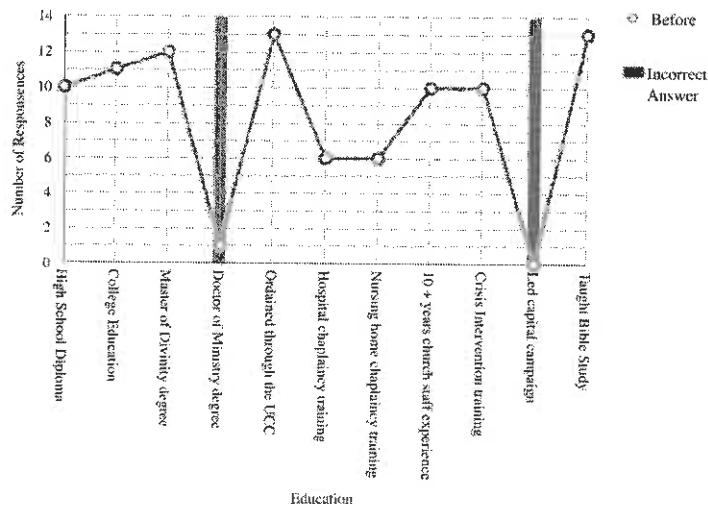
3) How much compensation do you think the Associate Pastor receives each month?

How much compensation do you think the Associate Pastor receives each month?



- 4) What kinds of education and training do you think the Associate Pastor has:

What kinds of education and training do you think the Associate Pastor has?



- 5) Name three skills that both Senior and Associate have:

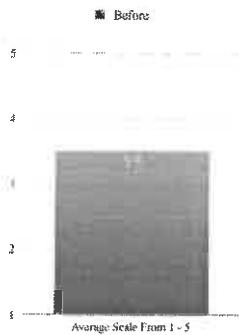
- Treat people with kindness, excellent sermons, give credit to each other, musicians, church members, for things done
- Preaching, teaching, pastoral care
- Preaching, teaching, management
- Ability to preach, lead, co-ordinate
- Preaching, teaching
- Teaching, preaching, leadership
- Articulate, well-educated, compassionate
- Both give good sermons, connecting Bible to real life today, both wonderful leaders, both have passion which inspires me.
- Listening, communication, counseling
- Excellent communications, excellent delivery of sermon, outgoing

- k) Communication, passion for the church, compassion
 - l) Preaching, counseling, community outreach
 - m) Preaching, prayer, pastoral care
 - n) Excellent communication skills, complete ability to lead worship, ability to serve others in time of “need” – weddings, funerals, illnesses, etc.
- 6) Name one special skill that each pastor has that the other does not possess.
- a) ability to listen deeply to what an individual is saying, not cookie cutter style / ability to speak extemporaneously (although topic is obviously well-studied and well-considered.)
 - b) Pastoral care / Administration
 - c) Better with small children / Preaching off the cuff
 - d) Tact
 - e) No answer
 - f) Music / Memorized sermon
 - g) Warmth / Extemporaneous sermons
 - h) I feel closer to Pastor Julie –she feels warmer to me / Pastor Dave is able to talk about controversial topics in a way that people can take in without defenses kicking in.
 - i) Ability to connect or communicate with children
 - j) Connection with youth (stronger) / spontaneous ability to draft letters, dev. Sermon
 - k) No answer

- l) Assoc is skilled at connecting with youth / Sr is skilled at sermon w/o notes
- m) Both have strengths and gifts. Can't identify any area where one has a strength that the other is weak in.
- n) Julie: Consistently "warm" in one-on-one contacts / David: Demonstrated administrative abilities (perhaps simply because of having had opportunities)

7) On a scale of one to five, how hierarchical is the church staff?

On a scale of 1 – 5, how hierarchical is the church staff?



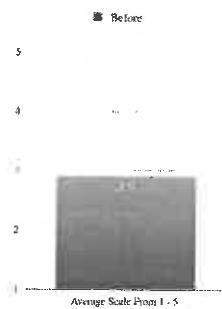
8) On a scale of one to five, how collaborative is the church staff?

On a scale of 1 – 5, how collaborative is the church staff?



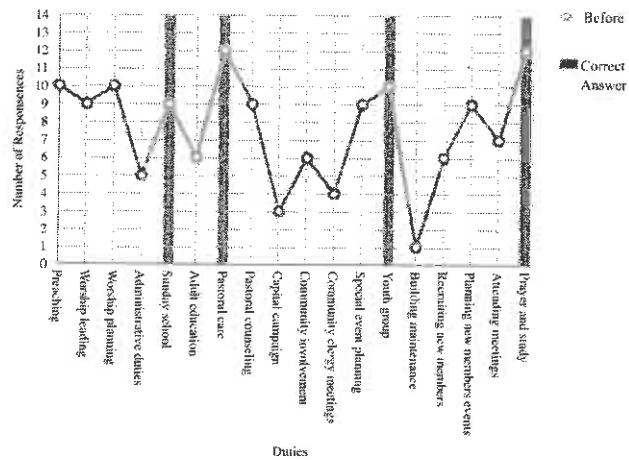
9) On a scale of one to five, how rigid is the division of labor?

On a scale of 1 – 5, how rigid is the division of labor?



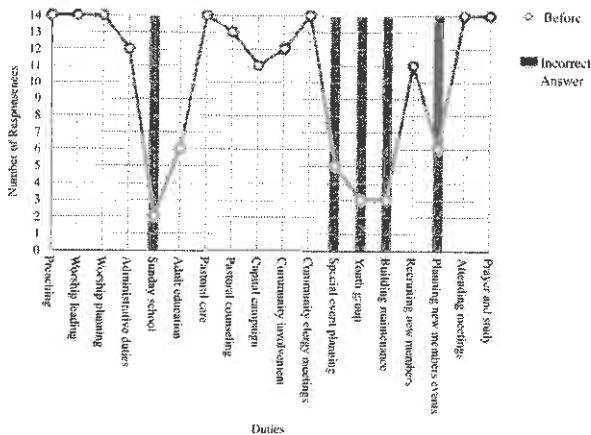
10) What duties are included in the traditional associate pastor position?

What duties are included in the traditional associate pastor position?



11) What duties are included in the traditional senior pastor position?

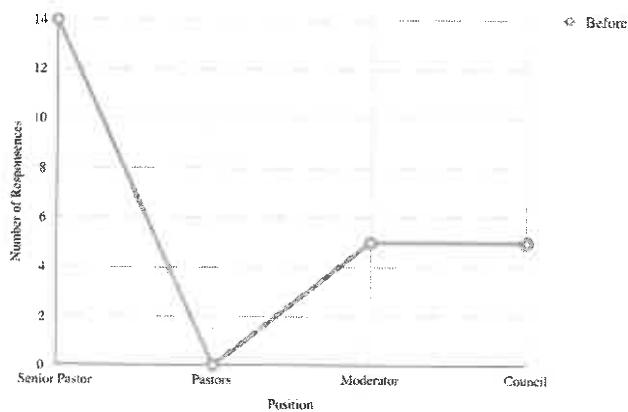
What duties are included in the traditional senior pastor position?



12) With whom does the buck stop at church?

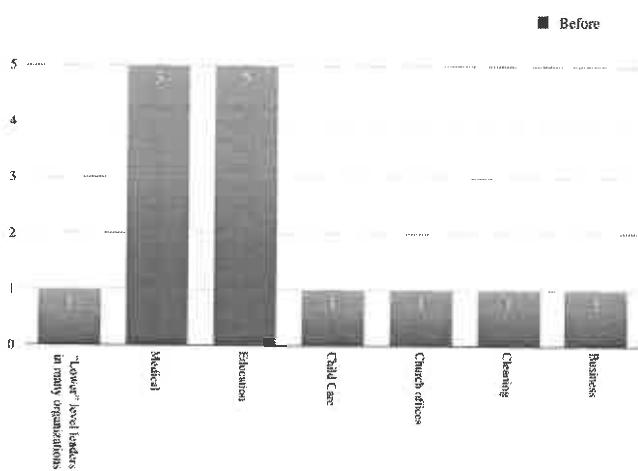
- a) All fourteen respondents named the senior pastor. However five respondents also acknowledged the Church Council and/or the moderator along with the senior pastor.

With whom does the buck stop at church?



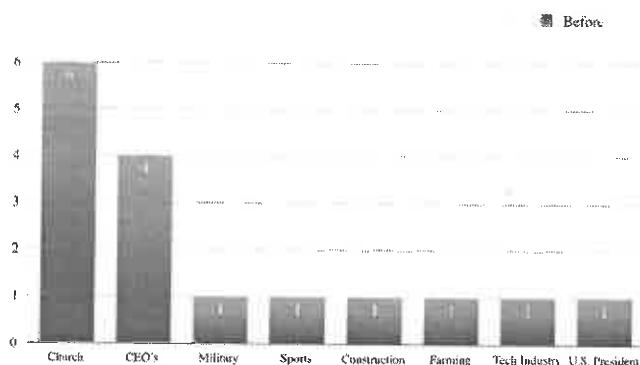
13) Name an area of work in the world where women are welcome to be leaders.

Name an area of work in the world where women are welcome to be leaders.



14) Name an area of work where women are not welcome as leaders.

Name an area of work where women are not welcome as leaders.



15) On a scale of one to five, how open is the congregation to women's leadership?

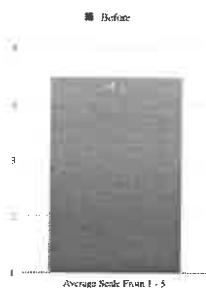
- a) One additional comment: "There was a time when almost all of our leadership was female."

On a scale of 1 - 5, how open is the congregation to women's leadership?



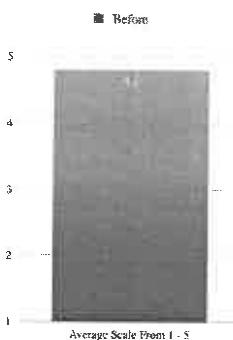
- 16) On a scale of one to five, how important is a stable staff to the effectiveness of the church?

On a scale of 1 – 5, how important is a stable staff to the effectiveness of the church?



- 17) On a scale of one to five, how many interpretations of scripture might exist?

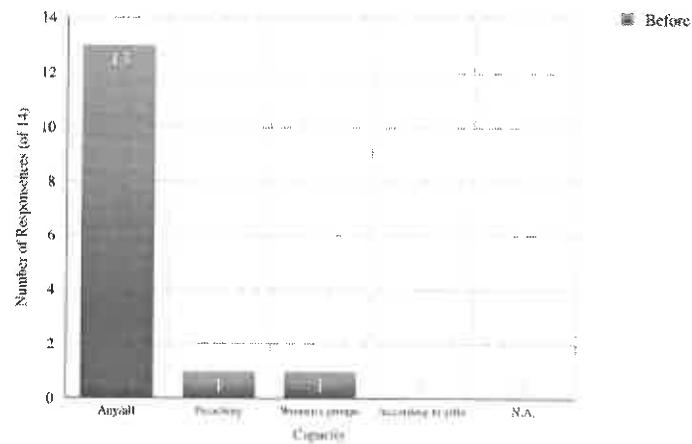
On a scale of 1 – 5, how many interpretations of scripture might exist?



- 18) In what capacities should women be encouraged to serve?

- a) Out of fourteen respondents, thirteen answered “all” or “any.”
- i) One specifically suggested preaching, and another added the following caveat, “I think church men’s and women’s groups are important and that if there is a leader or a pastor involved they should be the same gender as people in the group.”

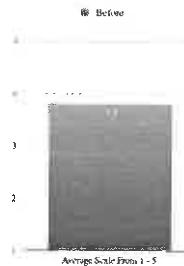
In what capacities should women be encouraged to serve?



19) On a scale of one to five, how much authority should the senior pastor have?

- a) Average: 3.8

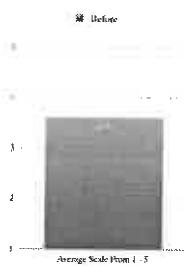
On a scale of 1 – 5, how much authority
should the senior pastor have?



20) On a scale of one to five, how much authority should the associate have?

- a) Average: 3.6

On a scale of 1 – 5, how much authority
should the associate have?



21) On a scale of one to five, how much authority would co-pastors have?

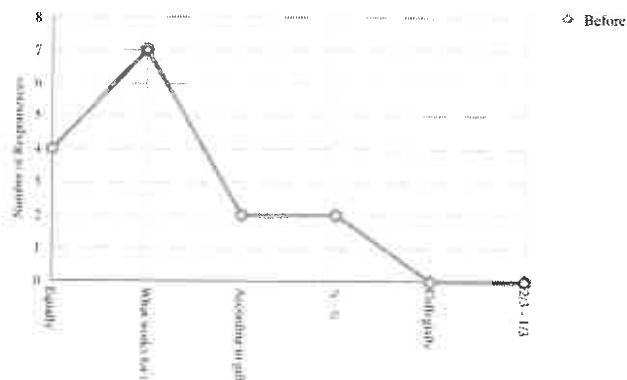
a) Average: 3.8

On a scale of 1 – 5, how much authority
would co-pastors have?



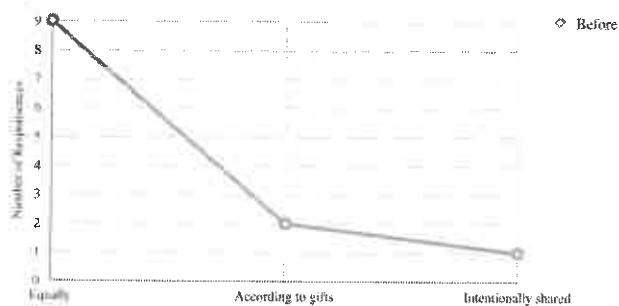
22) How should worship leadership be shared by associate and senior?

How should worship leadership be shared by associate and senior?



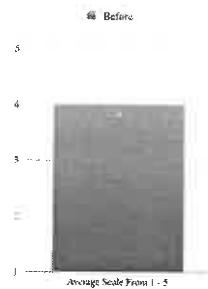
23) How should worship leadership be shared by co pastors?

How should worship leadership be shared by co pastors?



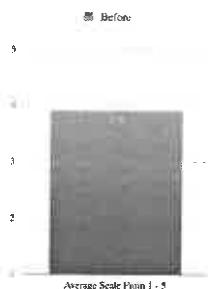
24) On a scale of one to five, how much do senior and associate share vision for church?

On a scale of 1 – 5, how much do senior and associate share vision for church?



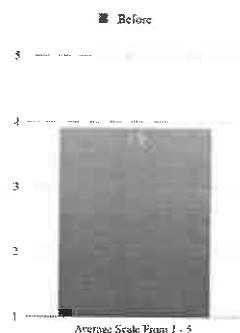
25) On a scale of one to five, how closely do you think men are made in the image of God?

On a scale of 1 – 5, how closely do you think men are made in the image of God?



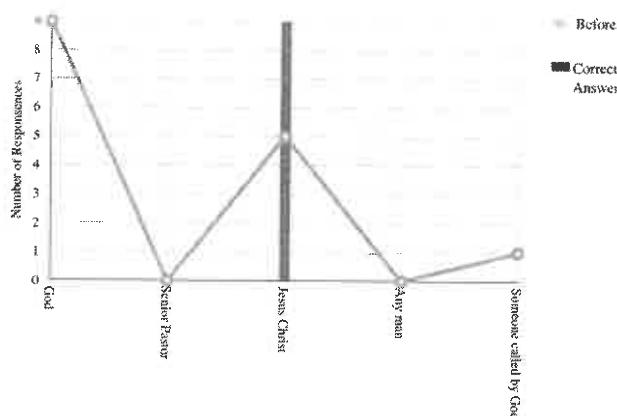
26) On a scale of one to five, how closely do you think women are made in the image of God?

On a scale of 1 – 5, how closely do you think women are made in the image of God?



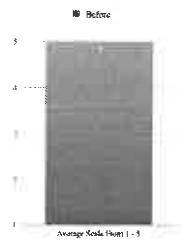
27) Who is the head of the church?

Who is the head of the church?



- 28) On a scale of one to five, how comfortable are you with the idea of an ordained woman leading your congregation?

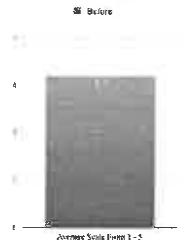
On a scale of 1 – 5, how comfortable are you with the idea of an ordained woman leading your congregation?



- 29) On a scale of one to five, how comfortable are you with the idea of an ordained man leading your congregation?

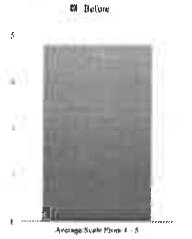
- a) Eleven respondents answered “five” while one respondent answered “four.”

On a scale of 1 – 5, how comfortable are you with the idea of an ordained man leading your congregation?



- 30) Your loved one is dying. You need someone to do the funeral. How willing would you be to have the Associate Pastor officiate?

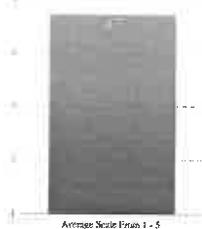
Your loved one is dying.
You need someone to do the funeral.
How willing would you be to have the Associate Pastor officiate?



31) How willing would you be to have the Senior Pastor officiate?

Your loved one is dying.
You need someone to do the funeral.
How willing would you be to have the
Senior Pastor officiate?

Before



32) Additional Factors (circle any/all that apply):

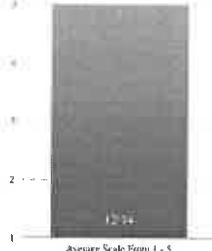
- a) Associate pastors can officiate? No thanks. 0
- b) Associate may serve only if the Senior is out of town 0
- c) Associate could co-officiate, but want the Senior Pastor there. 0
- d) Depends on who has been visiting, the kind of relationship built. 9
- e) Absolutely. No problem. 8
- f) We would prefer the Associate. 1

33) Your first grandchild has been born, and the parents, who are active members of the church of course, are planning a baptism. How willing would you be, on a scale of one to five, to have the Associate Pastor officiate?

- a) Twelve out of fourteen respondents indicated "five." Two did not answer.

Your first grandchild has been born, and the parents,
who are active members of the church
of course, are planning a baptism.
How willing would you be, on a scale of
one to five, to have the Associate Pastor officiate?

Before

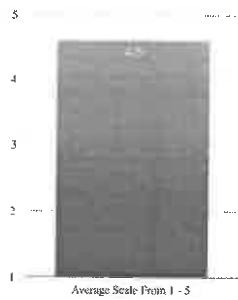


34) How willing would you be to have the Senior Pastor officiate?

- a) Eleven people answered "five" while one answered "four" and one answered "one." One did not answer.

Your first grandchild has been born, and the parents,
who are active members of the church
of course, are planning a baptism.
How willing would you be, on a scale of
one to five, to have the Senior Pastor officiate?

Before



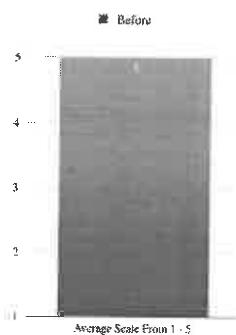
35) Additional Factors (circle any/all that apply):

- a) Associate pastors can officiate? No thanks. 0
- b) Associate may serve only if the Senior is out of town 0
- c) Associate could co-officiate, but want the Senior Pastor there. 0
- d) Depends on who has been visiting, the kind of relationship built. 8
- e) Absolutely. No problem. 9
- f) We would prefer the Associate. 1

36) Your children are getting married next year. How willing would you be, on a scale of one to five, to have the Associate Pastor officiate?

- a) Twelve out of fourteen respondents answered "five" while two did not answer.

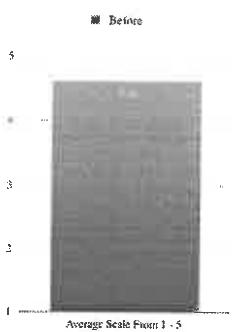
Your children are getting married next year.
How willing would you be, on a scale of
one to five, to have the Associate Pastor officiate?



37) How willing would you be to have the Senior Pastor officiate?

- a) Eleven answered "5" while one answered "1" and two did not answer.

Your children are getting married next year.
How willing would you be, on a scale of
one to five, to have the Senior Pastor officiate?



38) Additional Factors (circle any/all that apply):

- | | |
|--|---|
| a) Associate pastors can officiate? No thanks. | 0 |
| b) Associate may serve only if the Senior is out of town | 0 |
| c) Associate could co-officiate, but want the Senior Pastor there. | 0 |
| d) Depends on who has been visiting, the kind of relationship built. | 9 |
| e) Absolutely. No problem. | 7 |
| f) We would prefer the Associate. | 1 |

Session Two

In the second class, we went back and picked up the unfinished discussion about why pastors might leave, and then discussed traditional church staff arrangements, traditional delegation of duties, and alternatives that might benefit the pastors and church community. The class had lots of experience with alternative church staff arrangements, mostly from having visited other much larger congregations, but also from having worked in personnel, education, medicine, social work, science, business and politics. They became more aware of the limits of traditional roles and started thinking about different ways of sharing ministry.

Session Three

In the third class, the researcher laid out the road map to how to become a minister. In our denomination, the following are traditionally required: undergraduate degree, M.Div. degree from an accredited seminary, successful completion of the “In Discernment” program run through the Association, successful completion of a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, successful completion of an Ecclesiastical Council, receipt of a call to serve a local church, and an Installation service.

This led to an explanation of the changes that have been taking place in our denomination, Conference and Association in recent years. Strained financial situations have forced staffing cuts on every level of church governance, resulting in virtually no support for the search and call process for either pastors or local congregations. Pastors and congregations need better information and assistance in coming to agreements about service. Women who serve as associates may well find themselves their only advocate.

The participants were taught the areas where women are traditionally less welcome in leadership: government/politics, business/finance, academic/science, sports and religion. Statistics were shared on the limits of women's service in ministry across several denominations, underscoring the researcher's own denomination. A brief history of women's significant firsts was given, touching on both sacred and secular fields.

Next the class was asked to define collaboration with the researcher. The qualities and behaviors named include mutual trust, effective communication, coordination of effort, mutual respect, public recognition, support of each others' gifts, shared vision, unity with diversity, theological differences that sharpen the other without diverging from the core, complimentary roles. Other thoughts included time, patience, practice, willingness to compromise, freedom, not micromanaging, permission giving, blending of personalities, service oriented, more cooperative, problem solving, goals, evaluation, courage, willingness to fail, open to listen to the other.

Examples were solicited of collaboration in the secular world, and examined for success. Models in education, government, business, music, and sports were discussed.

Finally, the story was told of one associate pastor who served the same church for twenty-seven years under three different senior pastors. He had a specialty for which he was completely responsible, he had respect from the seniors, and he always felt like he was part of a team. Beyond that, he was humble about having been called to serve that church in that capacity and always felt it was sufficient and satisfying work.

Session Four

The fourth class included a Bible study of two passages that showed people serving in associate-like capacities with the intention of learning the difference between being a specialist and a generalist. First, the terms were defined, then several examples of collaboration were named: Simon and Garfunkel, who sang high and low, contributed music and lyrics, and played and performed together; a group of doctors all capable over all, but each possibly possessing a specialty in addition, being on call at different times to provide more coverage; huskies on the Iditarod who take turns leading the pack as they pull together, each knowing one part of the route so well that they could pull even in a whiteout; and a jazz quintet where each brings their instrument to the group to play together, shining especially brightly when they get to solo. These were discussed as having different percentages of generalist and specialist.

The first Bible passage studied was Genesis 41:38-40, where Joseph is named second in command of Egypt by Pharaoh and put in charge of dispersing wheat and grain to get them through the famine times. This was examined as an example of a specialist.

The second Bible passage was Titus 1: 4-5 that expresses Paul's endorsement of Titus after he was left on Crete to minister to the fledgling church Paul had planted there. This was named an example of a generalist.

Discussion also included study of two female associates to the Apostle Paul: Lydia and Phoebe, one who led church services in her home, while the other carried and explained Paul's letters to new Christian communities.

The class was asked to identify which secular example of collaboration matched each Bible story situation the best. They came to a consensus that Joseph and Pharaoh

were like the jazz group, each bringing their specific skill to the situation, whereas Titus and Paul were like the doctors, each capable of managing the whole, with a slight angle of specialty.

Session Five

The fifth class was a lecture that covered what it means to be made in the image of God. This included a study of what information we think we have about the image of God, a Bible study on the creation story about Adam and Eve, which words signify partnership or subjugation, how the order of creation led to cultural and religious endorsement of hierarchy and patriarchy, what kind of relationships Jesus had with women and how all of this impacts a congregation's expectations about who they want in the pulpit and in leadership.

Session Six

In the sixth class the group was asked to think about their church and its leadership. They generated lists on a white board about the blessings they experienced in this church, the dreams and wishes they had for it, and how they would want the continuation of those blessings and the journey to those dreams staffed. The post-test was given, taken, and returned, thanks were expressed. Results are shown below.

Blessings:

Ability to change, willing to try, the people in the congregation are varied, diverse, and have an open spirit, not doctrinal, casual, comfortable, two services that differ in style and content, congregational-based decisions, the position of women in the

church, music, intergenerational, not perfect, nurtures children, able to engage in dialogue, comfortable worship, celebration, happy, I feel better when I leave

Dreams:

Budget covered, more mission outside the church, joy of giving, more service opportunities, Wi-Fi, more lay ministry, more people on the prayer team, thriving adult education, small group ministries, experiential worship, everyone brings a Bible to worship, year-long Bible study, Stephen Ministry prosper, more potlucks, more variety in the community, children be especially welcome, gluten-free bread offered at communion

How to staff it:

Divide funerals, baptisms, weddings January – May / June – December, gifts based, skills based, try something for 6 months, re-evaluate, happy to help, ask someone directly to do specific task, sub-leaders, two full time pastors, two part time pastors

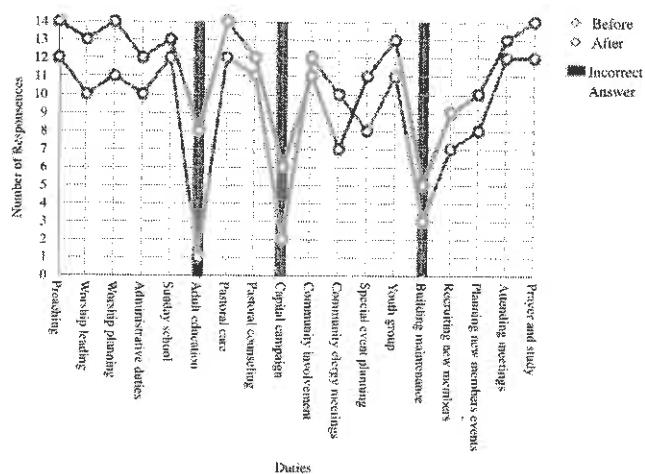
Comparison of Focus Group Pre-Test and Post-Test Responses

1) How many hours a week do you think the associate pastor is contracted to work each week?

- a) Pre-Test: Only one out of fourteen respondents knew how many hours a week the associate is contracted to work, which is twenty-five.
- b) Post-Test: Ten out of twelve gave the correct answer.

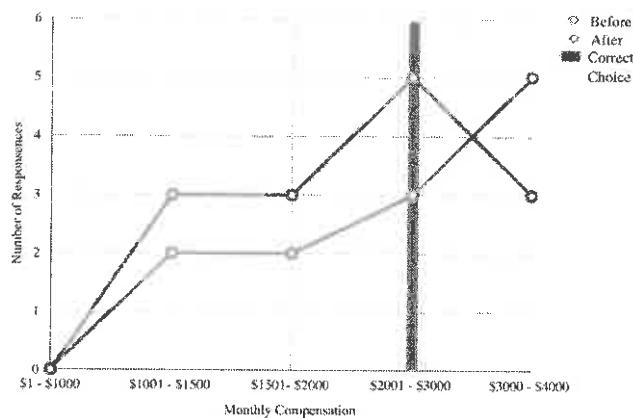
2) What are her duties and areas of service?

What are the Associate Pastor's duties and areas of service?



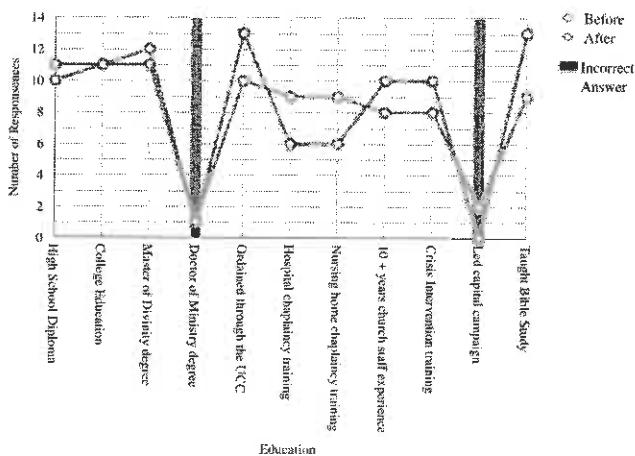
3) How much compensation do you think the Associate Pastor receives each month?

How much compensation do you think the Associate Pastor receives each month?



- 4) What kinds of education and training do you think the Associate Pastor has:

What kinds of education and training do you think the Associate Pastor has?



- 5) Name three skills that both Senior and Associate have:

- a) Pre Test Responses and Post Test Responses

i) The responses fell into three general categories of overlapping skills: public worship skills (preaching, welcoming, teaching, leading, being faithful, and being educated, outreach, passion for the church), personal counseling skills (relationship building, counseling, openness, understanding, respectfulness, and prayer) and administrative skills (administration, communication). Also listed were generosity and connecting to youth.

- 6) Name one special skill that each pastor has that the other does not possess.

- a) Pre-Test Responses

i) Respondents generally divided the two pastors by traditional lines: she was “warmer,” better with children and pastoral care, his preaching without notes was mentioned often, as was his leading the capital campaign and doing building project.

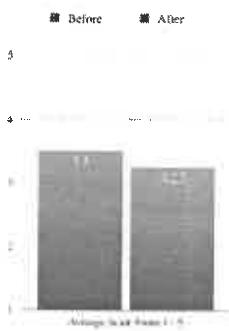
- b) Post-Test Responses

- i) Out of twelve respondents, six did not answer. Two people mentioned working with small children, three people mentioned preaching without notes, and three people named music.

7) On a scale of one to five, how hierarchical is the church staff?

- | | |
|----------------------|------|
| a) Pre-Test average: | 3.5 |
| b) Post-Test average | 3.25 |

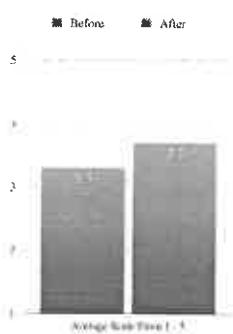
On a scale of 1 – 5, how hierarchical is the church staff?



8) On a scale of one to five, how collaborative is the church staff?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| a) Pre-Test average: | 3.3 |
| b) Post-Test average: | 3.7 |

On a scale of 1 – 5, how collaborative is the church staff?



9) On a scale of one to five, how rigid is the division of labor?

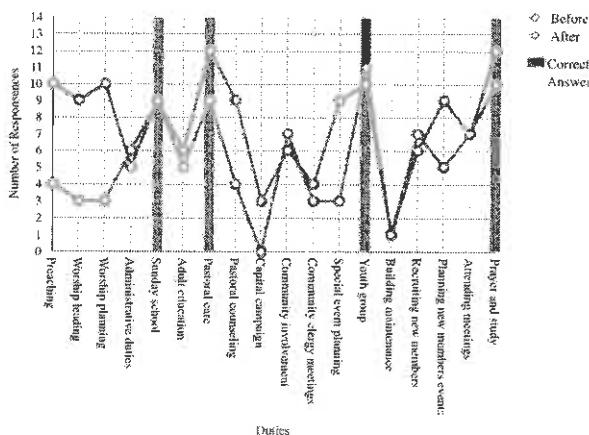
On a scale of 1 – 5, how rigid is the division of labor?

Before After



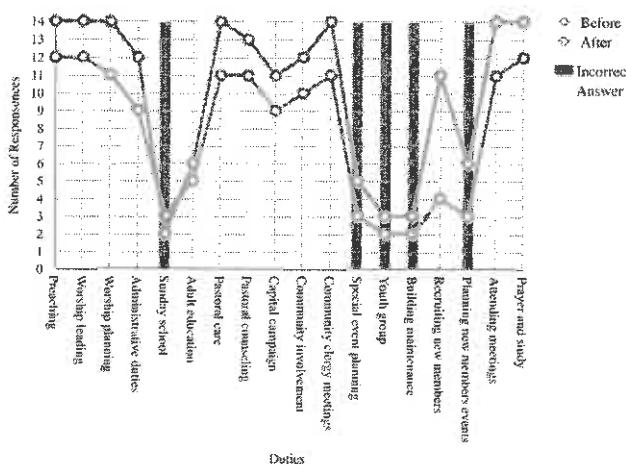
10) What duties are included in the traditional associate pastor position?

What duties are included in the traditional associate pastor position?

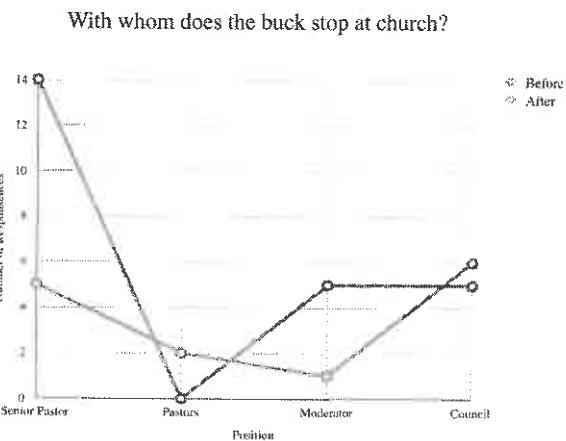


11) What duties are included in the traditional senior pastor position?

What duties are included in the traditional senior pastor position?

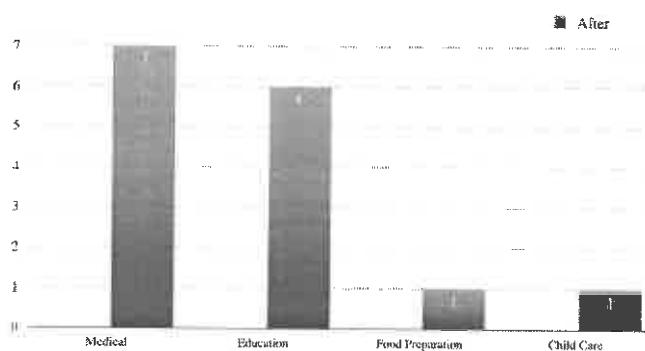


12) With whom does the buck stop at church?

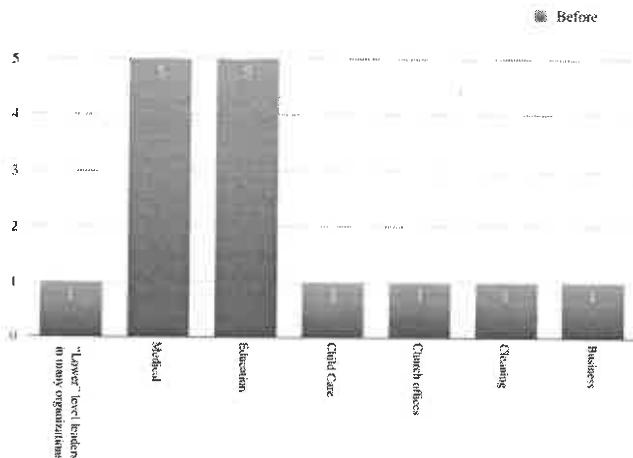


13) Name an area of work in the world where women are welcome to be leaders.

Name an area of work in the world where women are welcome to be leaders.

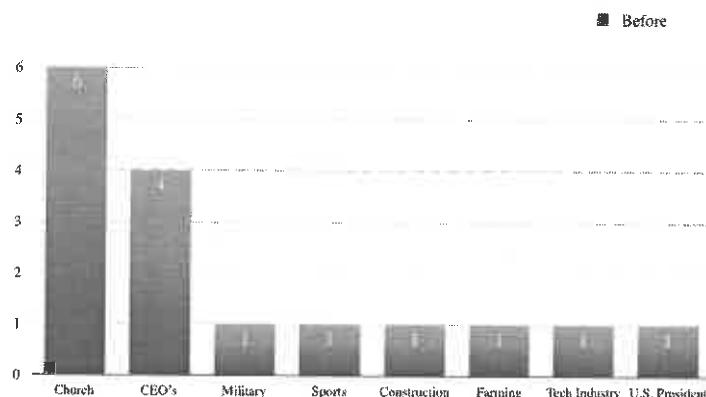


Name an area of work in the world where women are welcome to be leaders.

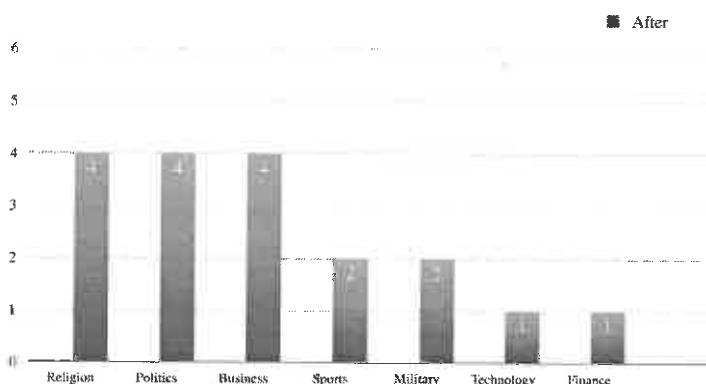


14) Name an area of work where women are not welcome as leaders.

Name an area of work where women are not welcome as leaders.



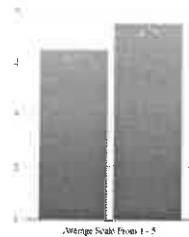
Name an area of work where women are not welcome as leaders.



15) On a scale of one to five, how open is the congregation to women's leadership?

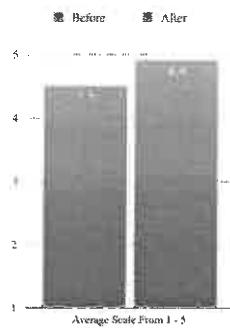
On a scale of 1 – 5, how open is the congregation to women's leadership?

■ Before ■ After



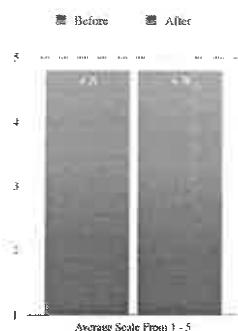
- 16) On a scale of one to five, how important is a stable staff to the effectiveness of the church?

On a scale of 1 - 5, how important is a stable staff to the effectiveness of the church?



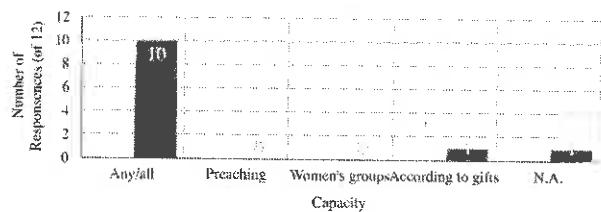
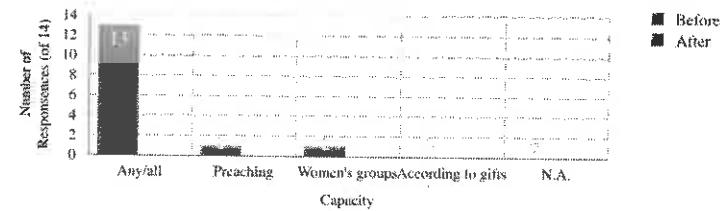
- 17) On a scale of one to five, how many interpretations of scripture might exist?

On a scale of 1 - 5, how many interpretations of scripture might exist?



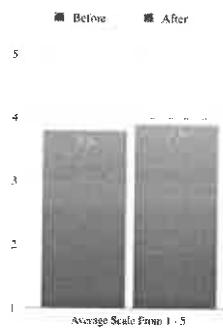
18) In what capacities should women be encouraged to serve?

In what capacities should women be encouraged to serve?



19) On a scale of 1 – 5, how much authority should the senior pastor have?

On a scale of 1 – 5, how much authority
should the senior pastor have?



20) On a scale of one to five, how much authority should the associate have?

On a scale of 1 – 5, how much authority
should the associate have?

■ Before ■ After

5

4

3

2

1

Average Scale From 1 - 5

21) On a scale of one to five, how much authority would co-pastors have?

On a scale of 1 – 5, how much authority
would co-pastors have?

■ Before ■ After

5

4

3

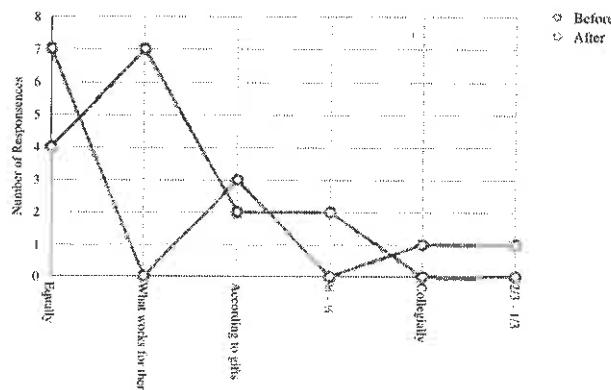
2

1

Average Scale From 1 - 5

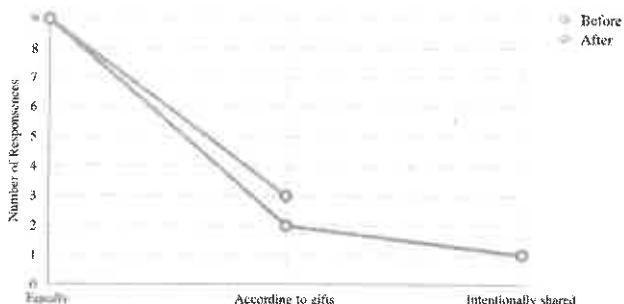
22) How should worship leadership be shared by associate and senior?

How should worship leadership be shared by associate and senior?



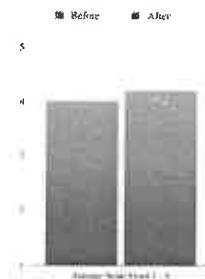
23) How should worship leadership be shared by co pastors?

How should worship leadership be shared by co pastors?



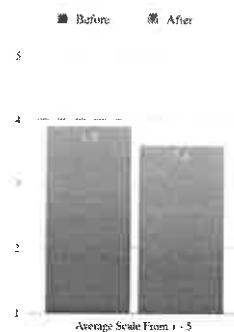
24) On a scale of 1 – 5, how much do senior and associate share vision for church?

On a scale of 1 – 5, how much do senior and associate share vision for church?



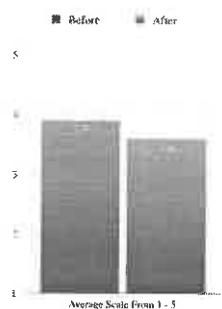
25) On a scale of 1 – 5, how closely do you think men are made in the image of God?

On a scale of 1 – 5, how closely do you think men are made in the image of God?



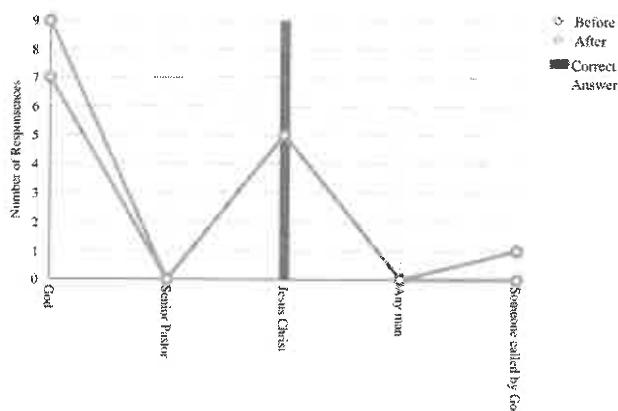
26) On a scale of one to five, how closely do you think women are made in the image of God?

On a scale of 1 – 5, how closely do you think women are made in the image of God?



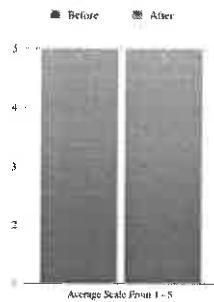
27) Who is the head of the church?

Who is the head of the church?



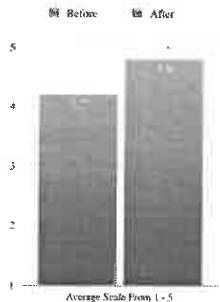
28) On a scale of one to five, how comfortable are you with the idea of an ordained woman leading your congregation?

On a scale of 1 - 5, how comfortable are you with the idea of an ordained woman leading your congregation?



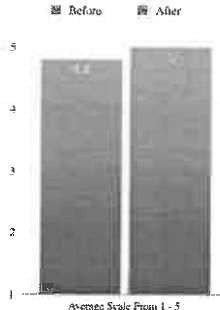
29) On a scale of one to five, how comfortable are you with the idea of an ordained man leading your congregation?

On a scale of 1 - 5, how comfortable are you with the idea of an ordained man leading your congregation?

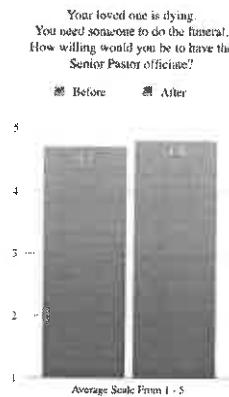


30) Your loved one is dying. You need someone to do the funeral. How willing would you be to have the Associate Pastor officiate?

Your loved one is dying.
You need someone to do the funeral.
How willing would you be to have the
Associate Pastor officiate?



31) How willing would you be to have the Senior Pastor officiate?



32) Additional Factors (circle any/all that apply):

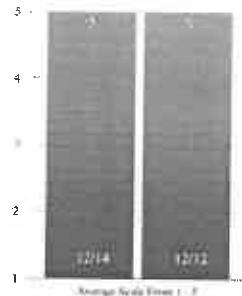
- a) Associate pastors can officiate? No thanks. 0 0
 - b) Associate may serve only if Senior is out of town 0 0
 - c) Associate could co-officiate, but want the Senior Pastor there.
- 0 0
- d) Depends on who has been visiting, the kind of relationship built.
- 9 7
- e) Absolutely. No problem. 8 11
 - f) We would prefer the Associate. 1 1

33) Your first grandchild has been born, and the parents, who are active members of the church of course, are planning a baptism. How willing would you be, on a scale of one to five, to have the Associate Pastor officiate?

- a) Pre-Test Responses: 12/14: 5
- b) Post-Test Responses: 12/12: 5

Your first grandchild has been born, and the parents,
who are active members of the church
of course, are planning a baptism.
How willing would you be, on a scale of
one to five, to have the Associate Pastor officiate?

Before After



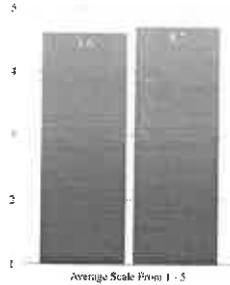
34) How willing would you be to have the Senior Pastor officiate?

a) Average:

4.6 4.7

Your first grandchild has been born, and the parents,
who are active members of the church
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How willing would you be, on a scale of
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Before After



35) Additional Factors (circle any/all that apply):

a) Associate pastors can officiate? No thanks. 0 0

b) Associate may serve only if Senior is out of town 0 0

c) Associate could co-officiate, but want the Senior Pastor there.

0 0

d) Depends on who has been visiting, the kind of relationship built.

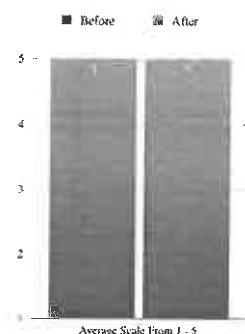
8 8

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| e) Absolutely. No problem. | 9 | 7 |
| f) We would prefer the Associate. | 1 | 1 |

36) Your children are getting married next year. How willing would you be, on a scale of one to five, to have the Associate Pastor officiate?

- | | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| a) Pre-Test: | 5 | 5 |
|--------------|---|---|

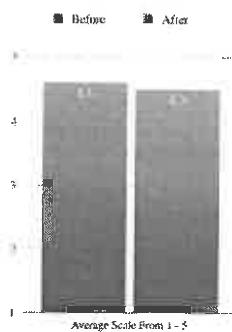
Your children are getting married next year.
How willing would you be, on a scale of
one to five, to have the Associate Pastor officiate?



37) How willing would you be to have the Senior Pastor officiate?

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----|-----|
| a) Pre-test average: | 4.6 | 4.5 |
|----------------------|-----|-----|

Your children are getting married next year.
How willing would you be, on a scale of
one to five, to have the Senior Pastor officiate?



38) Additional Factors (circle any/all that apply):

- | | | |
|--|---|----|
| a) Associate pastors can officiate? No thanks. | 0 | 0 |
| b) Associate may serve only if Senior is out of town | 0 | 0 |
| c) Associate could co-officiate, but want the Senior Pastor there. | | |
| | 0 | 0 |
| d) Depends on who has been visiting, the kind of relationship built. | | |
| | 9 | 7 |
| e) Absolutely. No problem. | 7 | 10 |
| f) We would prefer the Associate. | 1 | 1 |

Summary of Learning from Congregational Focus Group Sessions

The focus group's responses on their post-test indicated that they became increasingly aware and open to the state of the associate pastor. The first question alone revealed a seventy-six percent increase in awareness. Over the course of the six weeks, the participants really grew in general acceptance of the associate pastor, which raises the question of simple exposure into the equation. Just by facilitating conversation, people's exposure to the associate increased: conversations were had, prayers shared, questions asked and answered. Although no weddings, funerals, or baptisms were performed during that time, the participants' scores on willingness to have her officiate went up in each category, and she scored higher than the senior in each situation as well.

In response to the question about with whom the buck actually stops, the pre-test was heavy with answers of senior pastor. By the end of the sessions, while no one said

the buck stops with the associate pastor, the respondents had lightened considerably on answering just the senior pastor. They spoke more of the Council, the moderator, and the pastors together. The classes seemed to diffuse a center of power that, maybe by default, swirled around the senior pastor.

The class's final scores varied on all the nuts and bolts of the pastor's job, from salary to duties to education. Possibly the focus group was more confused in the end than at the beginning. More likely some people missed a few classes and just guessed. Another possibility is that the job is rather complex, justifying several right answers.

One area of learning in which the focus group excelled was the understanding of the traditional associate package versus gifts based work division. They recognized this pattern in our church and in other churches they know and saw its pitfalls and limitations.

They also grew in their perception of the congregation's acceptance of women's leadership at church and in the importance of a stable staff.

This group was not willing to admit a sexist view on the imago Dei. They insisted that men and women are made equally in the image of God. They responded that they were completely comfortable with an ordained woman leading their congregation. Not one of them would say that a man was the head of the church. These answers reflect a progressive denomination, a fairly progressive community, a self-selected group of people, and probably the fact that the associate pastor was standing nearby waiting to collect their responses.

The feminist theology was received with some division. The class discussed Adam and Eve being more partners than leader/follower. There were those in the class for whom this was an unacceptable viewpoint. Two people said that the word "feminism"

was offensive and should not be used. However, for others the starting assumption that God was male was too conservative, even unacceptable; and they refused to start there. In the end we started with God is love, and they seemed content to disagree about perception of gender. It would be hard to be part of that discussion without having some ideas challenged, or at least engender the idea of one's mind being blown in ways one never imagined through Biblical study. The yields of that class are yet to be really identified.

The participants realized to some degree the kind of senior pastor required to establish a collaborative staff: secure, humble, generous, flexible. They also seemed to appreciate the sense of authority and responsibility that would make the difference between picking up the unwanted pieces that no one wants to do and cobbling them into a job description, and answering a call from God to use one's gifts faithfully.

In the end, the focus group participants proved to be more forward thinking than first predicted. They also grew in acceptance more than expected. They were more receptive to women's leadership and whatever kind of support it would take to provide the fulfillment and stability she would need to bear fruit in faithful ministry.

Conclusions

The final question to ask of this process is what common perceptions, understandings and visions can be identified amongst the various participants in this study? The strongest common component among responses from associates, seniors and congregation members was the importance of being faithful to God's call to ministry. Among the respondents there was one pair of senior and associate who served the same

church. This unique pair reflected better than average tenure and fulfillment, as well as being highly collaborative, and regularly supported by staff formation and continuing education. Since it was just one pair, this evidence remains somewhat anecdotal. Aside from a call to faithfulness to the call, there was no obvious overlap among the three groups. The associates valued a clear job description based on gifts and skills, a sense of valued authority and autonomy. The congregation grew in their understanding of a gifts and skills based job description, the value of women's leadership. The seniors viewed the associates in terms of how they and the church benefitted from the associates' work: they valued collegiality, communication, mutual respect and the sharing of ideas and conversation. They were grateful for the associate and missed them when they were not there, but there was a limited sense of traditional versus gifts and skilled based job descriptions, the particular challenges of being a woman in ministry, the difficulty in establishing appropriate pastoral authority as an associate, and the disproportionate congregational bias for the senior as officiant for weddings, funerals, baptisms and communion. Seniors and associates could benefit from a conversation about what it would be like to walk in each others' shoes, the challenges of each position, and what would make their position better.

Collaboration, while a popular buzzword in many facets of today's culture, may be an unrealistic goal for pastors sharing ministry. There are elements of collaboration that can be included in a working relationship like good communication, a shared vision, and mutual respect. However, collaboration to a greater degree may yield overlap, a slowed business response, confusion, and frustration. Collaboration in ministry has been compared to building a bicycle while riding it. It would be the researcher's

recommendation to look at the ways an associate's position could be improved, while keeping the spirit of collaboration as a sub-goal.

Just as each church is different from another, senior/associate working relationships, and duties assumed by each will differ as well. So adjust these conclusions to each individual situation. When making changes to a church staff configuration, there are three areas that need attention and communication: the senior pastor, the associate pastor and the congregation. Some change does depend on the graciousness and security of the senior pastor. If the senior has served as an associate, is looking for change, or is open-minded, s/he may be open to a discussion about the following and how these items can encourage and support an associate: a public endorsement of the associate, the public granting of authority to the associate, a clear job description for the associate, a job description for the associate based on gifts and skills, a periodic review of how things are going with all staff members, honest communication with the associate, continuing education for the associate, and a vision for ministry that can be shared with the staff and implemented together as a united front. If the senior pastor is not open to these, there are still things that can be done to improve the associate's fulfillment and stability in their ministry.

The congregation can be an active force for good on the associate pastor's behalf. The first thing congregation members can do is to call the associate by the proper title, whatever that may be. That may mean asking what title that is, and encouraging others to use that title as well. Respect the job description the associate has. If there is a question of problem in the associate's area of responsibility, go to the associate directly. Do not go to the senior pastor. Show support for the associate's initiatives and programs. The

congregation can consciously participate as faithfully when the associate is leading as when the senior is leading. Show appreciation for the associate's areas of expertise, encourage continuing education, and ask her for her opinion. Make sure she is included in conversations that are traditionally male dominated, like buildings and grounds. Practice getting used to seeing a woman in the pulpit. Invite other women to preach in addition to the associate pastor. Avoid commenting on how the associate looks. Gear your conversation toward professional or spiritual matters. Respect her as you would any other professional.

If the associate finds herself handed the traditional associate package: Sunday school, youth group, and pastoral care, or is frustrated by the limits of her position, she can still take steps to improve her lot. The first question to ask is if she is faithful to God's call to her. Connect with God. Pray about this. Revisit the call you received and see if it is still there. Listen for God's voice about this. Then try to identify where joy is found in your ministry. Look deeply for this as it is probably buried under administrative details. Identify your own gifts and skills, possibly by use of a survey or by talking with the people who know you well. Ask yourself whether your gifts and skills are being used well in your calling. Ask yourself how they might be used in your calling.

When possible, use continuing education to increase your skills in your areas of responsibility. This will increase not only your skills but also your authority within the congregation, regardless of the area. If you are a generalist, secure those skills so they are trustworthy, and then add an area of specialization. If you are a specialist, identify that area, and excel in it. Communicate your job description clearly with the congregation. Communicate clearly with the senior pastor and be as honest as possible. Negotiate your

own compensation, or select an advocate to do this. This may take some assertiveness. Build an honest and candid relationship with the senior. Ask the senior to describe the vision for ministry currently held, and uphold it together. All of these points will increase the associate's ownership of her position.

Churches are creatures of habit, and they will continue as before if allowed to do so. Change needs to be a conscious choice, and the activity of changing takes more energy than just doing what is easiest or fastest. Helping a congregation develop a healthy respect for an associate takes strategy and skill. Consistent and repeated communication is essential. The congregation will grow in acceptance when they receive regular and varied exposure to the associate and see her serving in many different capacities. The congregation may already have an understanding of the traditional associate package and only need identification of the particular gifts of their current associate to help them understand her job description. If the associate has a specialty, it is helpful for the senior to make a referral to the associate in case of request for assistance in this area. The more practice a congregation has with consistent, clear communication of a job title or description the more they will understand and respect it. Finally, churches can and should be proud of themselves for trying something new, for responding to a new situation, and for supporting their staff members. As part of the body of Christ, churches thrive as a permission-giving congregation instead of a permission-denying church.

There are some things that lead to fulfillment and stability in associate ministry, but in truth they are more elusive than a particular job description. In the tradition of the United Church of Christ, calls to ministry depend on three parties agreeing: the pastor, the congregation and the Holy Spirit. The presence and movement of the Holy Spirit may

have a significant impact on the acceptance and success of a particular ministry, as in the story of Joseph and Pharaoh. Keeping in tune with the Spirit of the Lord is important in any ministry.

Another piece that is hard to quantify or measure is chemistry with the senior pastor. Both associates and seniors talked about this being important to the success of ministry, but not everyone knew how to improve it if it was sagging. Some qualities that can improve a staff relationship include honesty, respect, and appreciation. Another unusual quality that sometimes helps is the ability to create joy to share. Sometimes job satisfaction boils down to whether it is an enjoyable experience or not.

Finally, associates need to know that they are valued and that they are making a contribution. Associates who combine authority, responsibility for a specialty, respect and a shared vision reaped greater satisfaction and longevity on the job.

Some women have broken through the stained glass ceiling. A few have shattered it in spots. But those who have broken through often bear the scars of the journey, and the ceiling is never far away. Although it remains largely intact, a subtle but obstinate barrier to the full acceptance of women in religious leadership, a spirit of collaboration can be an invitation for women's ideas and work in ministry to be more accepted and sought after. Women associate pastors who balance a spirit of collaboration with autonomy and authority will find increased fulfillment and stability in their ministry.

APPENDIX A

INVITATION TO RESPOND TO ASSOCIATE PASTOR SURVEY

June 30, 2014

Dear

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ! I bring you greetings from Windsor United Church of Christ where I serve as Associate Pastor. I've been here for about three years and am enjoying serving this community of God's people very much.

I'm currently working on my doctorate, addressing the problem of women Associate Pastors tenures averaging half as long as that of Senior Pastors. My work focuses on how to make Associate Pastorates more fulfilling, sustainable, and stable. Part of my project includes research into the state of the Associate Pastor's role and work in ministry, and what she would change if she could. I hope you will help me by reflecting on your time as an Associate Pastor, whether current or historical, and answering the questions posed in the attached survey.

Please reply by August 15, 2014. You may reply on the survey provided or write me directly via email. A line is provided for our name, but you are welcome to leave your responses anonymous if you like. If you'd be willing to answer any follow up questions I might have for you, please enclose a telephone number or email address.

Many thanks, and blessings to you in your ministry,

Rev. Julie Overman

pastorjulie@windsorucc.org

APPENDIX B
ASSOCIATE PASTOR SURVEY

Associate Pastor Survey

- 1) How long have you served as an Associate Pastor?
- 2) Was your original goal to be an Associate Pastor, Senior Pastor or something else?
- 3) Was the job description clear when you met with the search committee? Was it negotiable?
- 4) What are your areas of responsibility? How were they determined? Have they changed at all? If so, how did that happen?
- 5) Where does your job description especially reflect your gifts? How did that come about?
- 6) Are there things you would like to do that you feel you cannot? Why or why not?
- 7) Describe the similarities and differences in skill sets that you and the Senior Pastor possess.
- 8) Is there a sense that you both can do everything or do you have separate duties?
- 9) Who does weddings? Funerals? Baptisms? How is that determined?
- 10) Who decided what your compensation package would include?
- 11) Is Continuing Education offered? Have you taken it? What did you do? Did it help you in your Associate position? If so, how?
- 12) Has the staff done any intentional work on establishing, maintaining or growing staff relationships? Was it effective?
- 13) What do you think are the most helpful characteristics of a successful and fulfilling Senior/Associate relationship?
- 14) On a scale of one to five, one being dissatisfied and five being very satisfied, how satisfied would you say you are with the ministry you do?
- 15) On a scale of one to five, one being dissatisfied and five being very satisfied, how satisfied would you say you are with the ministry you share?
- 16) What is the best or most fulfilling part of your role as Associate? Your work with your colleague? Your plans for your ministry?

- 17) What is the most frustrating part of your role as Associate? Your work with your colleague? Your plans for you ministry?
- 18) How do you and the Senior Pastor communicate? By what means? Who initiates?
- 19) Do you work together on anything? If so, what and how?
- 20) In what ways is your work with the Senior Pastor hierarchically stratified?
- 21) In what ways is your work collaborative?
- 22) In what ways is your work cooperative?
- 23) In what ways is your work autonomous?
- 24) To what sort of relationship would you compare your working partnership with your pastoral colleague?
- 25) Describe what makes your role feel fulfilling, successful and stable?
- 26) What factors are most important when considering how long to stay in this position? How long did you stay in this position? Why did you leave?
- 27) What advice would you offer someone considering a call to associate ministry?
- 28) Does the entire staff have a shared vision of ministry? If so, how was that achieved or communicated?
- 29) On a scale of one to five, one being completely collaborative, and five being entirely autonomous, how would you rank your experience as an Associate?
- 30) And where would it be ideally?

OPTIONAL:

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Email address _____

APPENDIX C

INVITATION TO RESPOND TO SENIOR PASTOR SURVEY

June 30, 2014

Dear

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ! I bring you greetings from Windsor United Church of Christ where I serve as Associate Pastor. I've been here for about three years and am enjoying serving this community of God's people very much.

I'm currently working on my doctorate, addressing the problem of women Associate Pastors tenures averaging half as long as that of Senior Pastors. My work focuses on how to make Associate Pastorates more fulfilling, sustainable, and stable. Part of my project includes research into the state of the Associate Pastor's role and work in ministry, and what senior pastors find the most helpful about associates. I hope you will help me by reflecting on your time as a senior pastor, whether current or historical, and answering the questions posed in the attached survey.

Please reply by August 15, 2014. You may reply on the survey provided or write me directly via email. A line is provided for our name, but you are welcome to leave your responses anonymous if you like. If you'd be willing to answer any follow up questions I might have for you, please enclose a telephone number or email address.

Many thanks, and blessings to you in your ministry,

Rev. Julie Overman

pastorjulie@windsorucc.org

APPENDIX D

SENIOR PASTOR SURVEY

Senior Pastor Survey

- 1) How long did you serve as a senior/solo pastor?
- 2) How long did you serve with an associate pastor?
- 3) Were you ever an associate pastor?
- 4) Was your original goal to be an associate pastor, senior pastor or something else?
- 5) How was the job description for the associate created? Was it negotiable?
- 6) What are your areas of responsibility? How were they determined?
- 7) Where does your job description especially reflect your gifts? How did that come about?
- 8) Describe the similarities and differences in skill sets that you and the associate pastor possess.
- 9) Is there a sense that you both did everything or did you have separate duties?
- 10) Who did weddings? Funerals? Baptisms? How was that determined?
- 11) Who decided what each compensation package would include?
- 12) Was Continuing Education offered? Did you take it? What did you do?
- 13) Did the staff done any intentional work on establishing, maintaining or growing staff relationships? Was it effective?
- 14) What do you think are the most helpful characteristics of a successful and fulfilling Senior/Associate relationship?
- 15) On a scale of one to five, one being dissatisfied and five being very satisfied, how satisfied would you say you are with the ministry you did?
- 16) On a scale of one to five, one being dissatisfied and five being very satisfied, how satisfied would you say you are with the ministry you shared?
- 17) What was the best or most fulfilling part of working with an associate?

- 18) What was the most frustrating part of working with an associate?
- 19) How did you and the associate communicate? By what means?
- 20) Did you work together on anything? If so, what and how?
- 21) In what ways was your work with the associate hierarchically stratified?
- 22) In what ways was your work collaborative or cooperative?
- 23) In what ways was your work autonomous?
- 24) To what sort of relationship would you compare your working partnership with your pastoral colleague?
- 25) Describe what makes your role feel fulfilling, successful and stable?
- 26) What factors are most important when considering how long to stay in a position?
How long did you stay in your positions? Why did you leave?
- 27) What advice would you offer someone considering a call to associate ministry?
- 28) Did the entire staff have a shared vision of ministry? If so, how was that achieved or communicated?
- 29) On a scale of one to five, one being completely collaborative, and five being entirely autonomous, how would you rank your experience as a senior pastor?
- 30) And where would it be ideally?

OPTIONAL:

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Email address _____

APPENDIX E
FOCUS GROUP PRE/POST-TEST

PRE/POST-TEST

1. How many hours do you think the Associate Pastor is contracted to work each week?
2. What are her duties and areas of service? Circle all that apply.
 - a. Preaching
 - b. Worship leading
 - c. Worship planning
 - d. Administrative duties
 - e. Sunday School
 - f. Adult Ed.
 - g. Pastoral Care
 - h. Pastoral Counseling
 - i. Capital Campaign
 - j. Community Involvement
 - k. Minsiterium (Community clergy mtgs)
 - l. Special Event planning
 - m. Youth Group
 - n. Building Maintenance
 - o. Recruiting new members
 - p. Planning new members events
 - q. Attending meetings
 - r. Prayer and study
3. How much compensation do you think the Associate Pastor receives each month?
 - a. \$1 - \$1000
 - b. \$1001 - \$1500
 - c. \$1501- \$2000
 - d. \$2001 - \$3000
 - e. \$3000 - \$4000
4. What kinds of education and training do you think the Associate Pastor has:
 - a. High School Diploma
 - b. College Education
 - c. Master of Divinity degree
 - d. Doctor of Ministry degree
 - e. Ordained through the United Church of Christ
 - f. Hospital chaplaincy training
 - g. Nursing home chaplaincy training
 - h. 10 + years church staff experience
 - i. Crisis Intervention training
 - j. Led capital campaign
 - k. Taught Bible Study

5. Name three skills that both Senior and Associate have:
 6. Name one special skill that each pastor has that the other does not possess.
 7. On a scale of one to five, how hierarchical is the church staff?
 8. On a scale of one to five, how collaborative is the church staff?
 9. On a scale of one to five, how rigid is the division of labor?
10. What duties are included in the traditional associate pastor position?
- a. Preaching
 - b. Worship leading
 - c. Worship planning
 - d. Administrative duties
 - e. Sunday School
 - f. Adult Education
 - g. Pastoral Care
 - h. Pastoral Counseling
 - i. Capital Campaign
 - j. Community Involvement
 - k. Minsiterium (Community clergy mtgs)
 - l. Special Event planning
 - m. Youth Group
 - n. Building Maintenance
 - o. Recruiting new members
 - p. Planning new members events
 - q. Attending meetings
 - r. Prayer and study
11. What duties are included in the traditional senior pastor position?
- a. Preaching
 - b. Worship leading
 - c. Worship planning
 - d. Administrative duties
 - e. Sunday School
 - f. Adult Education.
 - g. Pastoral Care
 - h. Pastoral Counseling
 - i. Capital Campaign
 - j. Community Involvement
 - k. Minsiterium (Community clergy mtgs)
 - l. Special Event planning
 - m. Youth Group
 - n. Building Maintenance

- o. Recruiting new members
- p. Planning new members events
- q. Attending meetings
- r. Prayer and study

12. With whom does the buck stop at church?
13. Name an area of work in the world where women are welcome to be leaders.
14. Name an area of work where women are not welcome as leaders.
15. On a scale of one to five, how open is the congregation to women's leadership?
16. On a scale of one to five, how important is a stable staff to the effectiveness of the church?
17. On a scale of one to five, how many interpretations of scripture might exist?
18. In what capacities should women be encouraged to serve?
19. On a scale of one to five, how much authority should the senior pastor have?
20. On a scale of one to five, how much authority should the associate have?
21. On a scale of one to five, how much authority would co-pastors have?
22. How should worship leadership be shared by associate and senior?
23. How should worship leadership be shared by co pastors?
24. On a scale of one to five, how much do senior and associate share vision for church?
25. On a scale of one to five, how closely do you think men are made in the image of God?
26. On a scale of one to five, how closely do you think women are made in the image of God?
27. Who is the head of the church?
 - a. God
 - b. Senior Pastor
 - c. Jesus Christ
 - d. Any man
 - e. Someone called by God

28. On a scale of one to five, how comfortable are you with the idea of an ordained woman leading your congregation?
29. On a scale of one to five, how comfortable are you with the idea of an ordained man leading your congregation?
30. Your loved one is dying. You need someone to do the funeral. How willing would you be to have the Associate Pastor officiate?

How willing would you be to have the Senior Pastor officiate?

Additional Factors (circle any/all that apply):

- a) Associate pastors can officiate? No thanks.
- b) Associate may serve only if the Senior is out of town
- c) Associate could co-officiate, but want the Senior Pastor there.
- d) Depends on who has been visiting, the kind of relationship built.
- e) Absolutely. No problem.
- f) We would prefer the Associate.

31. Your first grandchild has been born, and the parents, who are active members of the church of course, are planning a baptism. How willing would you be to have the Associate Pastor officiate?

How willing would you be to have the Senior Pastor officiate?

Additional Factors (circle any/all that apply):

- a. Associate pastors can officiate? No thanks.
- b. Associate may serve only if the Senior is out of town
- c. Associate could co-officiate, but want the Senior Pastor there.
- d. Depends on who has been visiting, the kind of relationship built.
- e. Absolutely. No problem.
- f. We would prefer the Associate.

32. Your children are getting married next year. How willing would you be to have the Associate Pastor officiate?

How willing would you be to have the Senior Pastor officiate?

Additional Factors (circle any/all that apply):

- a. Associate pastors can officiate? No thanks.
- b. Associate may serve only if the Senior is out of town
- c. Associate could co-officiate, but want the Senior Pastor there.
- d. Depends on who has been visiting, the kind of relationship built.
- e. Absolutely. No problem.
- f. We would prefer the Associate.

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

Position Description: Associate Pastor

Purpose: To provide leadership and support for the church's program and mission in the areas of visitation and pastoral care, to lead group worship for pre-K – 3rd, teach the senior high youth class, assist with and contribute to general pastoral duties.

Accountability: Accountable to the congregation and to the senior pastor as head of staff.

Responsibilities: Assist or share with the head of staff in leading worship, preaching as scheduled and conducting funerals and weddings.

Develop pastoral care or support ministries for persons with particular needs, with particular emphasis on new members and the elderly.

Develop and maintain a program of visitation in cooperation with the Lay Ministry Team and Stephen Ministries Team.

Assist in the integration of new members and fringe members into the life, work and fellowship of the church.

Teach the Senior High Youth class and assist senior pastor in arranging special events.

Work with the Sunday School Superintendent as needed and lead group worship twice a month for pre-K – 3rd graders.

Assume necessary responsibilities in the absence of the head of staff.

Relationships: Works in close cooperation with the pastor as head of staff, moderator, church administrator and Sunday School Superintendent, and music director. Attends Council meetings and committee meetings as scheduled, responding to requests of the Council and various committees for information and assistance, and reporting on areas of leadership and responsibility.

Evaluation: Performance reviews will be conducted annually by the Personnel Committee and the pastor as head of staff. The Personnel Committee will annually review the adequacy of compensation.

APPENDIX G
SAMPLE CALL DOCUMENTS

Call Agreement

On this day, _____, in _____, having sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit and believing that God has called us to share in a mutual and common ministry in Christ, the members of _____ Church at a regularly-called meeting, held on _____, voted to enter into covenant with you, a servant of God, to become pastor and teacher of this church beginning on _____.

I. TERMS OF CALL

This is an agreement between _____ Church in _____, _____ and the Reverend _____ called as Associate Pastor. All parties execute this agreement in good faith.

The terms of call outlined in this agreement are contingent upon your holding Ordained Ministerial Standing with the _____ Association of the _____ Conference of the United Church of Christ. Should Ordained Ministerial Standing be suspended, revoked, or transferred for any reason, this agreement can be terminated immediately by the Church Council, representing our congregation.

Believing that the cause and mission of Christ's church will be forwarded under your pastoral and spiritual leadership, we join in this agreement.

Our church calls you to accept this pastoral office by recognizing and acknowledging with us the responsibilities and duties as our pastor, including those described in the attached job description and those by the customs and usages of the pastoral office of the United Church of Christ as defined in the *United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry*, which include the right and responsibility of participation and leadership in the mission of the United Church of Christ, the ecumenical church, and the community.

As a congregation, we wholeheartedly commit ourselves to the following terms of the covenant as we call you to be pastor and teacher.

II. SALARY AND HOUSING

Because our church is committed to fair and just compensation, we provide the following financial care. All figures listed in this section are annual amounts and will be pro-rated during the remainder of the current budget year.

Cash Salary

Beginning on _____, our church will pay a cash salary of \$ _____. The treasurer of our church will make these payments on a semi-monthly basis.

Housing Allowance

Our church will provide a housing allowance of \$ _____ in accordance with Internal Revenue Service guidelines. Your housing allowance includes the costs of all utilities, maintenance, and furnishings.

III. BENEFITS

Annuity Plan

Our church will pay, on your behalf, an amount equal to 14% of the pension basis to your account in the Annuity Fund of the United Church of Christ. The pension basis equals total cash salary plus housing allowance. Using the information in this agreement, the pension basis for this year is _____ and the annual contribution is _____.

Health and Dental Plan

Our church will provide coverage for you and your eligible immediate family in the United Church of Christ Health Insurance and Dental Plan.

Social Security and Medicare Offset

Our church will compensate you for the portion of Social Security and Medicare we would pay if you were permitted by the Internal Revenue Service to be paid as an employee of the church. This amount is the percentage established annually by the IRS. The current percentage equals _____ of cash salary and housing allowance, and will be paid to you on a quarterly basis.

Life Insurance and Disability Income Plan

If you are eligible to participate, our church will contribute 1.5 % of the salary basis to the Life Insurance and Disability Income Plan of the United Church of Christ on your behalf. Using the information contained in this agreement, the annual contribution for this plan is \$ _____ (1.5 % of the salary basis).

IV. OTHER PASTORAL MINISTRY EXPENSES

Our church recognizes that to call forth the gifts God has given you to lead our church faithfully, we must provide both resources and support that will assist you in remaining vital, creative, and energetic for this ministry on our behalf. Therefore, our church will provide you the following pastoral ministry support and reimbursement for expenses incurred while you are conducting ministry on behalf of this church.

Professional Expenses

Our church will reimburse you for professional expenses not to exceed _____ per annum. Professional expenses include such items as books, journals, entertainment expenses for church guests, professional dues, vestments, and other legitimate costs incurred as a result of your service to this church. You may submit expense items for reimbursement on a monthly basis.

Conference, Association and Wider Church Meetings

Our church values your participation in the wider church. Thus, we will reimburse reasonable expenses for attendance and participation in our United Church of Christ national, conference, association, and other meetings. When these events occur during a time we regularly gather for worship, the church will make other provision to provide leadership for our worship services. The amount established for meeting expenses is included as a portion of professional expenses.

Continuing Education

Our church encourages and supports your opportunities to participate in continuing education programs to strengthen your ministry in this church. Therefore, we have budgeted \$_____ annually for the cost of the educational opportunities, not including travel costs, which are addressed separately below.

Travel Costs

Our church will reimburse you, at the Internal Revenue Service mileage rate established each year, for using your automobile in traveling to church related conferences, as well as the cost of room and board while attending school activities, as well as conference, association, and wider church meetings. Therefore, we have established up to \$_____ for this year to cover such costs.

VI. SABBATICAL LEAVE

Our church will provide you with a sabbatical leave of _____ months after _____ years of ministry with our church. During your sabbatical, we will pay your full salary and benefits. We expect you to share with the Church Council, at least one year before beginning the sabbatical, the developing plans for time away. In your absence, we covenant to care for our church, our programs, our worship life, and each other. Further, we covenant not to use this time to accomplish or decide alone what we have not been willing or able to do together. We will, and we expect you will also, use the time to reflect on our mutual ministry in Christ and how we can live more fully into our call as Christ's church. Upon your return, we will invite you to share an overview of activities and learnings from your sabbatical with the church. Unless otherwise agreed before the sabbatical, we expect that you will continue as our pastor and teacher for at least one year after your return.

VII. WEEKLY SCHEDULE, VACATION, FAMILY AND COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

Weekly Schedule

We realize that the demands of church life come at all hours of the day and night and that the covenant with our church requires your attention to matters often beyond your control. In addition, we recognize your need each week to take time for self and family. Therefore, we encourage and support your ability to manage the equivalent of _____ days off per week for rest, relaxation and time with family and friends.

Vacation

Our church provides you _____ weeks of vacation leave during each 12 months of service. The congregation is responsible for our church programs, worship life and each other during your vacation.

Personal/Compassionate Leave

Our church realizes that life is not always predictable or within our control. Therefore, in the event of special circumstances, compassionate leave is available. We understand special circumstances to include the death of an immediate family member, sickness, or personal crisis. We provide you with up to _____ days of compassionate leave per incident. Compassionate leave does not accrue and unused compassionate leave is not payable upon termination.

VIII. DISABILITY AND DEATH BENEFITS Disability Benefits

Initial Disability. If you become disabled and unable to meet pastoral responsibilities while serving our church, we are responsible for paying full salary, housing, and benefits for _____.

Period of Disability. If disability prevents you from performing pastoral responsibilities longer than _____ days, the church anticipates that the United Church of Christ Life Insurance and Disability Income Plan will become effective.

Death Benefits

In the event of your death while serving our church, we will provide your immediate family, in addition to salary earned but not yet paid: cash salary and housing for the current month; cash salary, housing, Social Security, and Medicare offset for a period of _____ days; and the cash value of any vacation leave earned. Further provisions, if necessary, may be considered and will be discussed with your family by our Church Council/Governing Board, and our Conference/Association minister, and the association committee on the ministry.

Disability and Death Benefits

If death occurs during the first 90 days of your disability, the church will provide your immediate family with up to _____ days of cash salary, housing, health and dental benefits, and Social Security and Medicare offset for both the initial period of disability and for a death benefit.

IX. REVIEW OF PASTORAL CALL AGREEMENT

Through our Church Council/Governing Board and in accordance with our church's budget cycle, the church will negotiate with you, annually, to update this agreement, keeping in mind increases in the cost-of-living, possible merit increases in salary, and consequent increases in benefits based on salary and housing.

X. OFFICE PROVISIONS

We agree to provide you with an easily accessible office, and to be sensitive to your needs for adequate support staff, appropriate surroundings and equipment.

XI. EVALUATION OF OUR CHURCH'S MINISTRY

Our church accepts its responsibility to live faithfully and in covenant with you, our pastor and teacher. Accordingly, at the end of our first year together and every year thereafter, we covenant to study, review and evaluate the priorities and total ministry (including staff) of our church. The Church Council will establish or assign a committee with responsibility to conduct this evaluation and make report to the Church Council.

XII. MEDIATION PROCEDURES

Our church acknowledges that even as we pledge our faithfulness to God, one another and you, there may be times when difficulties within our relationship begin to overwhelm us. In those instances, we covenant with you to seek the support, advice, and wisdom of our association, conference or regional minister, or our association committee on the ministry, in order that we actively work to maintain the goodness of our relationship and the goodness God has placed within it. Either you or the Church Council, representing our congregation, can request such a consultation, if in the opinion of either, our relationships are becoming ineffective or unhealthy.

XIII. TERMINATION OF PASTORAL CALL

Our church recognizes that relationships are always changing and that many reasons can lead to a separation. Thus, either party can terminate this pastoral call agreement giving at least 90 days' written notice to the other or upon other terms to which we both mutually agree.

XIV. FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PULPIT

Notwithstanding any of the other responsibilities outlined for our pastor in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of this church or in the other resources referenced on the first page of this document, in accepting pastoral leadership we also accept your freedom of expression in the pulpit as it pertains to matters of faith and faithfulness according to the insight of scripture, the work of the Holy Spirit, the traditions of the United Church of Chris, and the context in which we live our lives.

AGREEMENT

In witness thereof, we have signed our names on this ____ day of _____ 20_____. For the congregation:

Moderator/President: (Signature)

Date _____

Clerk/Secretary: (Signature)

Date _____

Treasurer: (Signature) _____
Date _____

Pastor-Elect's Acceptance:

Signature _____ Date _____

(Note: Affix church seal here, if available) _____

Four copies; one each to the following:

Pastor-Elect

Association Church and Ministry Committee

Associate Conference Minister

Local Church

APPENDIX H

**SAMPLE DIVISIONS OF
WEDDINGS, FUNERALS, COMMUNION AND BAPTISM**

Months are across the top of each chart.

Down the side are W: Weddings, F: Funerals, C: Communion, and B: Baptisms.

If the senior and associate are both full time, alternate monthly, quarterly, by weeks, seasons, or events.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
W	S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A
F	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	S
C	S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A
B	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	S	A	S
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
W	S	S	S	A	A	A	S	S	S	A	A	A
F	A	A	A	S	S	S	A	A	A	S	S	S
C	S	S	S	A	A	A	S	S	S	A	A	A
B	A	A	A	S	S	S	A	A	A	S	S	S

If the senior is full time and the associate is half time, use a 2:1 ratio.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
W	S	S	A	S	S	A	S	S	A	S	S	A
F	S	A	S	S	A	S	S	A	S	S	A	S
C	A	S	S	A	S	S	A	S	S	A	S	S
B	S	S	A	S	S	A	S	S	A	S	S	A
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
WS	S	S	S	A	A	S	S	S	S	A	A	A
F	S	S	A	A	S	S	S	S	A	A	S	S
C	A	A	S	S	S	S	A	A	S	S	S	S
B	S	S	S	A	A	S	S	S	S	A	A	S

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